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SHAZAM! the wonderful world of COMIX!

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8-18-1971 JOHN M. POUND

"They told me...

'Don't get into (comics)'...

I'm glad I didn't listen to them."

CARMINE INFANTINO, 1972

This interview with Carmine Infantino, president of the National line of comics, resulted from two long conversations with Carmine.

After working many years for various companies as a multi-talented storyteller, in 1967 Carmine was assigned to the post of editorial director at National. He immediately effected many changes in the then-stagnant DC comics line. Last summer he became publisher and was recently appointed to the post of president of the company------the rest is history.

Carmine, how did you first become interested in art?

That's a good question. You never really know when you started to become interested.

Well, some artists say they became interested in art as soon as they could pick up a pencil. Was it like that with you?

No. I didn't particularly like art to begin with. I liked films. I was a big nut for watching the directors. I really studied them. I didn't realize what I was doing at the time, namely studying composition and continuity. I guess that led into comics, the closest thing to films.

How did you get interested in comics?

I'm a child of the depression. In those days, there wasn't much you could do. You couldn't afford very much. You went into a thing that you felt you were most meant for. Films interested me, as I said. I couldn't get into movies, so I decided to draw.

Do you think the studying of films helped you with continuity?

Oh, tremendously. Hitchcock was great. I could watch a film of his ten times. He did brilliant things. "The Thirty-Nine Steps" comes on television once in a while. Watch it. Every scene was composed beautifully. Then there was Orson Welles' "Citizen Kane." Go see that.

Did you read comics?

Yeah, I was quite a fan. I used to read Caniff, Louie Fine, Reed Crandall. . . Hal Foster was a big favorite of mine.

What about the pulps?

Yeah. I liked Ed Cartier, who did The Shadow. Beautiful things. Excellent.

Did you just read comic strips, or the books too?

No, I read the books. I was a tremendous fan of Lou Fine, who did the Ray, the Black Condor, and some others. Lou was a designer. He influenced me quite a bit.

Who else influenced your work?

The first influence was Hal Foster. I studied his layout when he did Tarzan. I used to make copy after copy of that.

What about his later stuff, like Prince Valiant? Did that have any effect on your work?

No, no. It was mostly Tarzan, because there was pure genius in those layouts. I used to copy them and study them and try to understand them. I thought the movement was great. Everything about the stuff was great. From Foster I went to Caniff, who I studied for quite a while.
And then somebody said, "Why don't you go to art school and learn how to draw?" I did. I learned anatomy and so forth at a couple of schools; The School of Art and Design, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, and a few others. After I learned how to draw, I threw it all away and started designing. I'm basically a designer. If you look at my work, you'll see the anatomy is never correct. It was done purposely. I believed the movement was more important than having every muscle correct.

Like Jack Kirby. He never draws muscles correctly, but conveys the action.

Yes. I go in a different direction, but you'll fine the same principle. . . action. Jack is raw. He'll move hard and fast. He's got a tremendous punch. Mine was kind of soft and gentle. I think that was the difference. That is the impression I have. I studied with Jack for quite a while, you know. We worked together. You're bound to be influenced watching a guy.

What do you think of Jack's new books?

I wouldn't run them if I didn't like them.

Do you think that by giving him such free reign he's being carried away?

No.

Some of his stuff is so wild.

That's good. We need wild things. I want him to go crazy. It doesn't hurt. As a matter of fact, it's good.
Back to influences, Mort Meskin was a big influence on my work. After that, I kinda popped off on my own, designing. My feeling is more for design than for anything else. I like design and things that run ina rhythm. That's why I figured, oh, the heck with drawing. I could design better, so I went to design.

Then you consider composition more important than the actual rendering.

Absolutely.

Is that why your backgrounds were often nothing more than geometrical designs?

That's right. Because in my mind, the shape told the same story. You never felt cheated seeing that background, but if you looked at it closely there was nothing there. The stuff was deceptively simple. Ask Murphy Anderson. The poor guy had to ink it. He had his problems there.

Who are your favorite artists, past or present?

Jeez, there are so many.. . I think the fellows we have here at National are the greatest. Nick Cardy is one of the very best to me. Irv Novick, who very few talk about, Kirby, DiZuniga is sensational, Joe Kubert is a fiend. . . Wait till you see Joe's Tarzan of the Apes. You won't believe it.

I've seen some stats of the first issue. It reallylooks nice.

The second one makes that look sick. Unbelievable. Mike Kaluta was looking at it. I called him in and said, "Mike, do you want to get sick? Take a look at this." His eyes bulged!

Could you compare it to Tor?

Ten times better. Ten times better than anything Joe's ever done. It's that simple.
I don't want to slight Jim Aparo. I think he's great. Mike Kaluta. He's going to be doing the Batman covers for us from now on. I think he's going to be a young genius. He was nervous when I said, "You're doing the Batman covers." Dick Giordano. . .
As for artists, if they're working at National, I like them. Otherwise they wouldn't be working here.

Would you advocate going into comics as a profession?

Absolutely.

Many professionals advise against it because of the relatively small amount of money you get paid, difficulties in finding assignments, and so forth.

They told me the same thing thirty years ago. Six or eight guys who are no longer in the business (that's the crazy thing about

"I'm basically a designer"

"Thirty some odd years in the business. That's kind of a long history"

it) said,"Don't get into it. It doesn't pay enough. You'll never make any money. You'll never be happy." I'm glad I didn't listen to them. You've got to make your own decision.

Do you think it's better to enter the field through art school or as someone's assistant?

Both. Absolutely.

Which first?

Actually, I think you could do both at the same time. The school is tremendously important. There are things that you have to learn in school that you need. You just can't get them outside. And there are things you learn as somebody's assistant you might not learn in school.

Do you suggest studying the comics themselves?

Yeah, I'd study everyone. Everyone. I've got some particular favorites. I would particularly study a guy named Nick Cardy. He's a tremendous story teller. His Bat Lash . . .
Yeah, I'd study everyone. I'd watch everybody. But I'd still go to school to learn the basics; how to draw. That's number one.

If one wanted to go into comic art, what would you suggest as a course of study?

I would think, if available, courses on anatomy. Those would be the things to start with. Later on, composition and things like that. I studied them with a guy named William McNulty at the Art Students' League.

Burne Hogarth is now teaching at the School of Visual Arts.

Burne is a great man. But McNulty was a genius at composition. He taught me a tremendous amount. You have to get it all from everyone. These guys here [pointing to the current DC comics tacked to the wall] ... these guys think. We've got some great guys here. They really do great things.

How about a brief history of your career?

Thirty some odd years in the business. That's kind of a long history. I began with Quality Comics (Blackhawk, The Ray, etc.). They wouldn't let me draw. They'd only let me erase pages in those days. Then I did drawings for Fox. After Fox, I worked with Charlie Biro for a while. Then I worked for Jack Binder doing some backgrounds and things. From there (I was about seventeen or so) I came up to a company called National Periodicals, or something or other. I've been there ever since.

When you went to Fox, did you bring them some sample pages and they said, "Oh, they're great! You're hired."?

No. I copied Reed Crandall. They liked what they saw so they gave me a script. It was terrible. I pencilled six pages, I remember, and I sweated over every panel. When it was rejected, it was rough.

What was the first comic you actually did?

I think it was a thing called Jack Frost for Timely. Frank Giacoia was the inker. It was a kind of crappy adventure character. A nothing character. We have a lot of nothing characters here too.

Didn't you do some work for Holyoke?

That's right, I forgot them. And Hillman. I wrote and pencilled the Heap for them. Leonard Starr, who's doing "On Stage," inked it.

Did you create the Heap?
No, but I wrote quite a few of his stories.

The story, "Swamp Thing," in House of Secrets 92, by Len Wein and Berni Wrightson, was very similar to the original Heap.

Yeah. It got quite a lot of mail. I don't think it was intended to be similar, but you'd have to ask them. I don't want to answer for Len and Berni. I saw a similarity. It was emotional.

Have you seen Skywald's version of the Heap?

No, I haven't.

Your first strip for DC was Ghost Patrol. Can you give me some info on this and subsequent strips?

When Frank Giacoia and I came up here, we were a team. We met in high school, the School of Industrial Arts. We were both about fourteen and worked together quite a bit as a pencilling and inking team. We went up to National, and Shelly Mayer was editor up there at the time. He liked what he saw, and he gave us the Ghost Patrol. Then he gave us Johnny Thunder, the original Flash, and on from there.

Did you and Frank Giacoia work as a team before coming to DC or working on Jack Frost?

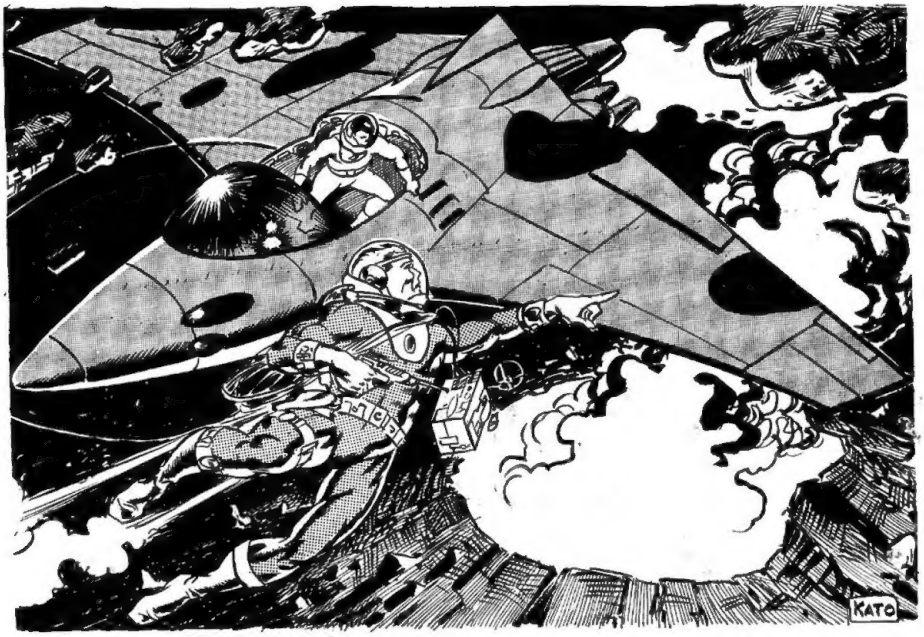
Yes, for Charlie Biro. I think we did westerns, but I don't remember.

Did you do the pencils and Frank the inks?

We began the other way. I was the inker, and he was the penciller.

When did you switch?

Bill Vigoda



Something happened. It flip-flopped. All of a sudden I began to pencil and he became inker. He's a great inker. I think he's sensational.

How would you rate your art of this period?

Lousy. It was crude. I mean, you always compare what you did to what you had done just before you stopped.

Were there any good parts?

Yes. The composition. I think sometimes you have more fun in the learning period than after you develop your art.

Was the composition similar to your more recent work?

No. It was a crude beginning, but it was in the direction I wanted it to go. It was a potpourri of things; square jaws, angular figures, crowded panels, and very bad drawing.

I understand at one time you drew The Boy Commandoes. Why?

Jack went into the service at that time, I think. I did some of them, not all. Joe Kubert did some too, I think.
At one point, Joe and I did a thing called Jesse James for Avon. I did the pencilling and he did the inking. We did three or four books of that. We were really having fun, just kidding around. I pencilled a book in a day and Joe inked it in a day. The whole book! If you look at it, you'll notice there weren't even borders. Joe was going so fast he forgot to put them on.

Did you ever find the quality of a story affecting the quality of your art?

Yeah, it's got quite an effect. No question about it. How you relate to a story is how you draw it.

Did you write Detective Chimp?

No, but I wrote some other things for Julie [Schwartz]. I did a western strip I think we called Kid Colby. I wrote the Heap and Airboy for Hillman. I drew some of the Airboy strips, too. Not too many of them.

Who wrote Detective Chimp?

John Broome. They were good. I enjoyed them.

I have some Atlas comics from the late fifties signed "J. Infantino."

That was my kid brother Jim. He's in advertising now.

The revivial of the Golden Age heroes started in 1956, with the Flash. Would the Code have had anything to do with it? It had limited some of the avenues that comics could take.

The business was ina slump at the time. Not a strong one. And every direction had been tried except bringing back old characters. So somebody suggested, "Let's bring back the Flash and see what happens."

Did you redesign the costume?

Yes, I did. Bob Kanigher wrote the thing. Joe Kubert inked the first story. Then it went on from there.

Did you prefer your work on Adam Strange (inked by others) to your work on Space Museum, another science fiction strip (inked by yourself)?

I liked Murphy Anderson's inking on Adam Strange very much. I guess you're always partial to what you do yourself, though. Julie hated my inking. Never liked it. I only did some inking. Space Museum, Super-Chief, Pow-Wow Smith, the Elongated Man, some others.

When you inked, it looks as though you used a pen almost exclusively. Is this correct?

Pretty much so. I like the feel of a pen.

But it looked so scratchy.

Yeah, I used it like a pencil. I pencilled that way also.

Why was the Elongated Man the only strip you inked in the later sixties?

"I think sometimes you have more fun in the learning period than after you develop your art"

No time to do others, really. Julie didn't like my inking anyway, as I said.

Well, why didn't he put you on one more pencilling job instead of the inking on that strip?

I wanted to ink and I liked the Elongated Man. I guess Julie figured I'd do less damage there than anyplace else. Dick Giordano is doing a beautiful job on the strip now. That man is just sensational. That's why I regretfully gave him up as an editor; to use him as an artist.

Who do you think is National's best inker?

I think Dick [is]. I personally feel that way.

Do you think you're a better penciller or inker?

I like both, because I think my inking fit my pencils.

A lot of people felt Murphy Anderson's slicker inks enhanced your pencils.

That's true. They certainly did. But you still favor your own inks. Murphy prefers to ink his own pencils to inking someone else's.

Do you have any inkers that you particularly enjoyed working with?

Murphy. I think he's great. He was my favorite, even over Giella, who I worked with for so long on Flash.

Was your artwork of the late fifties more similar to your current work?

It was evolving. I would experiment like crazy. I'd take a fountain pen and ink with it, chip off the end and put in flat blacks, just looking for directions.

Why didn't you use the continuity method of shadowed shapes from Strange Sports Stories and others again?

I don't know. When we started that book, Julie said to me he'd like to try something unique. So I went home and thought about it. I thought by using the silhouettes I could give the effect of motion. The guy swung at the ball, the bat followed through. So that's why;

it came about. I think I used it on a Phantom Stranger story years ago, illustrating the captions. But not to the same extent.

How about the captions themselves, which you always shaped into hand or profiles or something, like that?

Well, that was designing the captions. But I think that constantly using the shadows would bore the reader after a while, even though it showed up so much motion. For that particular thing it worked. It was a stamp for the book. It was a different type of thing.

How did the Sports DC Specials do?

The first one did well, the second one not so well, and the third not well at all. The mail was fantastic on all of them. Unbelievable.

Is the mail on any book an indication of its sales?

Not really. Strange Sports got enormous mail response. Sales weren't that good. Some books get no mail and do great. You just can't figure it out. Binky and Debbi get loads of mail. The kids loved them. They even write in their problems to the love books.

Why were you chosen to do the "new look" Batman?

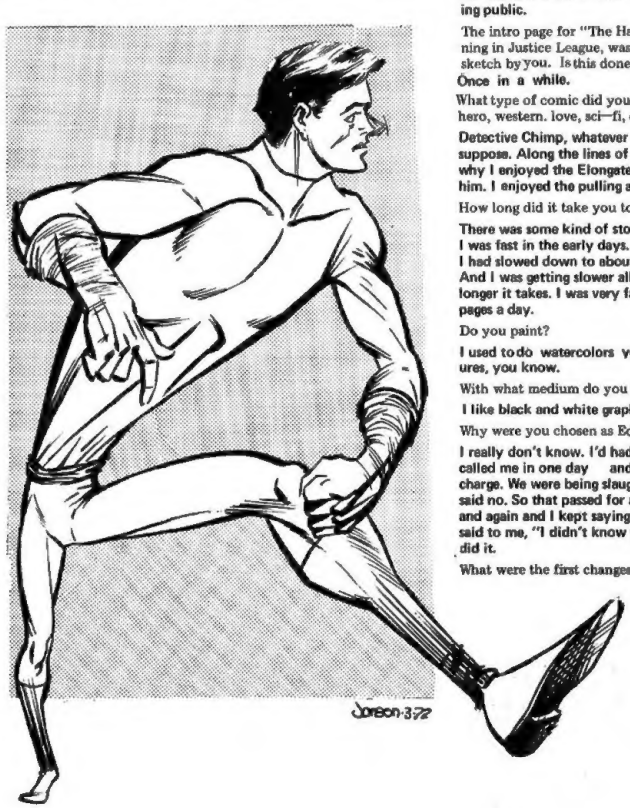
Well, I worked for Julie in those days. He was the editor, and he chose me. I was not a fan of Batman. I never did enjoy doing Batman. Neal [Adams] is the one who really does Batman.

Did you or Kane redesign Batman?

I did. In fact, I did the mock-ups for Filmation for the Batman television show.

What were the comments on your Batman, an new thing for you after you had been established for so many years as the Flash artist?

The reaction was mixed. Some liked it, some didn't. I didn't like it. I didn't like Adam Strange, either. I enjoyed doing Detective Chimp



"One day, Jack Liebowitz said to me, 'I didn't know you were afraid of a challenge.' That did it."

and the Elongated Man. There were times I enjoyed the Flash and times I got bored with it. I enjoyed a few Pow-Wow Smiths that I inked.

You did the first Batgirl story (Detective Comics 359). Did you design her costume?

Yes. I designed it for television originally. Then it was decided to incorporate the character into the strip.

Did you redesign Kid Flash's costume?

Yes, I did. I drew a cover sketch with that as the scene, and Julie decided to use it as the basis for a story.

Who designs the covers now?

I design most of the covers. Now and again someone will come in with a sketch, I'll like it, and I'll say, "Let's use it." But I design most. They're sometimes done before a story, some after.

How do you feel about word balloons on covers?

Some I like, some I don't.

It usually ruins the effect of the art.

For the fan. But the fan comprises a very small part of the buying public.

The intro page for "The Hall of Golden Age Heroes," running in Justice League, was drawn by Murphy Anderson from a sketch by you. Is this done often?

Once in a while.

What type of comic did you enjoy doing the most (war, superhero, western. love, sci-fi, etc.)?

Detective Chimp, whatever that would be classified as. Humor, I suppose. Along the lines of the original Plastic Man. I think that's why I enjoyed the Elongated Man so much, too. I had fun with him. I enjoyed the pulling and stretching, like Plastic Man.

How long did it take you to pencil and ink a page?

There was some kind of story going around about how fast I was. I was fast in the early days. Toward the end, I wasn't fast at all. I had slowed down to about a page and a half of pencilling a day. And I was getting slower all the time. The more you learn, the longer it takes. I was very fast at inking. I could do two, three pages a day.

Do you paint?

I used to do watercolors years ago. Seascapes, landscapes, figures, you know.

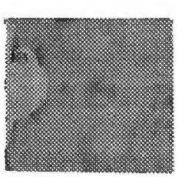
With what medium do you feel most comfortable?

I like black and white graphics. They're the toughest, I think.

Why were you chosen as Editorial Director?

I really don't know. I'd had very little editorial experience. They called me in one day and asked me if I would like to take charge. We were being slaughtered by Marvel at that time. I said no. So that passed for a few days and they asked me again and again and I kept saying no. Then one day, Jack Liebowitz said to me, "I didn't know you were afraid of a challenge." That did it.

What were the first changes you made as Editorial Director?



I was given the opportunity to pick whomever I wanted, the way I wanted it. That was when all the new stuff came out. I thought like an artist. This was a writer—oriented company to the point where the visual had practically disappeared.

Whereas it was just the opposite at Marvel.

Yes. So that's why I brought Joe Orlando, Joe Kubert and Dick Giordano in as editors. They were all artists.

Do you credit Dick with bringing many of the then—Charlton talents?

When I got ahold of Dick I insisted on a package; Jim Aparo, a kid named Sergius O'Shaugnessy (now Denny O'Neil) and Steve Skeates. I wanted the package. I knew what Denny had. I could read his stuff. I got the package and was very happy. I guess if this was a ball team I made a helluva deal on that one.

Why did Andru and Esposito replace you on the Flash? Wouldn't Murphy Anderson have done a job more similar to your own,and better for that matter?

A good question. I chose Andru and Esposito. I thought they could do it. I really don't think they felt the character though.

Your Flash was slimmer, lighter. All their characters are muscular and heavy. Irv Novick's Flash is much more like yours.

Sensational. He's doing a great job. That's the right guy for the job. Murphy is doing a lot of very important work now, like inking Curt Swan's Superman.

Swan is so underrated. I've always liked his Superman, especially when inked by Anderson or the late George Klein.
Why did you only do one Deadman, the first?

That's when I moved from being an artist to being Editorial Director. I think that was the last story I drew. Then Adams came along. You associate him with Deadman.

Well, he did all except that one.

Right, but I wrote them. I did the plotting, gave it to Jack Miller, who would write it down. Neal would draw it. I did the plotting, the dialogue, the whole thing. I did four or five of them, then I stopped.

I didn't know you were talented in the writing department.

I wrote Batlash too...

I thought Sergio. . .

I plotted it and gave the plot to him.He'd sit down and write it down. Denny would pick it up after it was drawn. . .
And the first new Wonder Woman was by Denny and I.

Then you're actually behind some of these changes Denny has been making.

That's correct, pretty much so. That's a very talented young man, Mr. O'Neil.

Now that he's editing Wor.der Woman, will he be writing less?

I suppose so.

Who are your favorite writers?

I think Denny is the best. Len Wein is second. Kirby. Outside of comics, I'm a fan of Bradbury.

Do you think the best comic artists are also good writers?

Some of them are. Some of them think they are. Some are very bad. Some examples might be Steranko on Nick Fury and Neal on Deadman. I'll tell you something about both of these fellows. When Neal took it over, whether you liked it or not, Deadman didn't sell anymore. Shield didn't sell so well when Jimmy took it from Kirby. So while I'm sure the fans liked it, I don't think the general public appeal was that strong. Neal thinks he's a good writer. We disagree, that's all. He may be. I don't think so.

What do you think of Wally Wood's statement, "The editor who edits best edits least."?

It depends on the quality of the people an editor's got working for him.

What character, as an artist, did you enjoy doing the most?

Detective Chimp.

How about from an editor's point of view?

Batlash. The book died though. Really loved that thing.

I think it was played too humorous for the western fans and too western for the humor fans.

Could be. We'll see about the reaction to the reprints in All—Star Western.

Is it true that you changed that book to Weird Western because Weird is what sells?

Yeah. That's the genre that sells so well now.

Why do you think horror is now weird and gothic, as opposed to... well, all your horror books used to be science fiction.

Escape. People want to get away from things. That's why we developed the gothic romance books. The field sold tremendously well in paperbacks for years and years.

"Change is necessary in anything."

In a radio interview, you mentioned the fact that you didn't put out horror comics. What about House of Mystery, Witching Hour, etc.,?

To me, horror comics are what Bill Gaines put out years ago, with the ax in the head; chopping up bodies; somebody eating somebody else.

What do you think of science fiction in comics?

It never sold. Including Bill Gaine's books. Our science fiction books of a couple years back never sold well. They just hung in there. Bill did some fantastic ones which didn't sell. I know this because Bill and I are rather close. Bill, to me, in every sense of the word, is a great publisher. He's a genius. And he doesn't have the ego of some people who don't have his talent.

Did you see the National Lampoon satire of Mad?

They thought they'd suck him in, but he didn't follow up. He's too smart for that. That magazine is twenty years old today and he's selling 1,750, 000 copies a month, I think. I think it's the third best selling magazine. That's genius.

Why were several best selling books (Superman, Batman,etc.) changed in format?

Because change is necessary in anything.

But you don't tamper with success do you?

Why not? Don't automobile people do it?

Are superhero sales dropping extremely, as was predicted in the late sixties by people like Dick Giordano?

No. Some of those books recently went monthly, as a matter of fact.

Why was Green Lantern/Green Arrow discontinued?

It didn't sell, that's all.

I heard a rumor that Neal Adams was having problems meeting deadlines.

That's one of the big reasons.The last book was two and a half months late. The printer wouldn't put up with it. We can't put up with it. It could've had a chance to grow eventually.

Do you read your competitor's work?

I look at them.

What do you think of all the new artists working for Jim Warren?

I saw their work a year ago. They're very talented. What I'm concerned with is, can you read it? I don't think they tell stories too well. The artwork is sensational, but look at their storytelling. That is what your selling, isn't it?

Is that why you like panels to conform to definate shapes?

I think it's easier to read. Another, more important reason is that it makes the artist think harder. When you're confined to a square box, you have to design the box as best you can. I don't think it really inhibits the artist.

What do you think of Marvel's twenty—centers?

I would have put out twenty cent comics if I had thought they were right. I think it's up to you to object, because you have to buy them. I didn't want to go to twenty cents because I didn't want to charge more and give nothing more. I don't think it's right. But I can't disagree with their right to do it. You have to give people something for their money, though. You can't cheat them. That's what I believe.

What about Marvel's reprint books? Roy Thomas said they were selling well.

Peculiar thing about Marvel. Their artists, writers, and editors have become distributors too. They seem to know more about distribution than their own distribution people. Very interesting. As for Roy Thomas, I'm not impressed with him. Not even with his Conan. Many people are. I had made a great remark that I didn't think Conan would go. And if I'm not mistaken, Roy wrote an article for a fanzine saying that one of the competitors thought the book wouldn't go, and suddenly it's going like crazy. Look at the figures again. It's now bi—monthly. I won't answer that. It's kid stuff to play that game with him. And he's alittle boy so I'm not going to play that. I'm not going to write a column for a fanzine. You don't buy a fanzine to hear about rivalry crap.

Stan Lee said, "For years the big things on campus had been McLuhan and Tolkien and Stan Lee and Marvel. And everyone knew about McLuhan and Tolkein but nobody knew about Marvel. Now our competitor is coming out with 'relevant' comics and he has a big public relations department, so he's been easing in on our publicity."

The interesting part is that Mr. Lee has had a personal PR man for years. I So I don't understand. And if I'm not mistaken, Denny started the relevant thing with Green Lantern.

Well, Marvel's books had relevancy before that. Just not a whole series devoted exclusively to it.

In 1939, Superman was ripping down slum lords. I don't think they started relevancy or we started it. He's telling the world that he did. If it makes him feel better. . .

Our PR department doesn't handle only comics. It handles paperbacks, Mad, Playboy, the whole group. They don't go out and seek publicity for us. I think Stan was a little wiped out about the New York Times using our Sgt. Rock as their magazine cover when they had anarticle on comics. We didn't push that. They did it on their own. And I don't take credit for what Kirby's done, like some people.

What do you think of Marvel's proposed Doc Savage book?

I wish themluck. I had the opportunity to take the character, but I didn't want it.I wanted Tarzan. I could've made a big mistake. The art(Andru/Severin) is going to be interesting.

Why are you continuing the Gold Key numbering?

Postal regulations.

How would you compare the methods of writing at National to those at Marvel?

NEWTON-
JANSON

We're very different. I prefer a tight script. Movie people do it the same way. Don't you get a feeling that there's a sameness in most of Marvel's books? I think that's one of the disadvantages in their format. But apparently it works for them. Ours works for us.

How do you feel about the code?

I feel it's necessary, because without it people would really go crazy. I think Marvel's going overboard with Werewolf by Night, Fear, and the like. I'm making objections to the Code about it. It's not creative.

Now that the Code has been liberalized, will you be coming out with anything like Marvel's Werewolf by Night?

Absolutely not. In no shape or form. That smacks of the old days with Wertham. This is crap. You don't have to do it. It's not creative one bit. I'll never do a book like that. If my my guys can't do better than that, then they don't belong in this business. Simple and frank. I really feel that sincerely. There are so many things you can do to be creative. This can only open up old wounds. It's senseless.

In another interview you said, "Comic books have more freedom than comic strips." What about the Code?

Comic strips have a stricter code. They have different editors across the country. They're really hard-nosed. You'd be surprised at the things they edit out. They're rough.

What do you think of the underground comix?

Well, they're growing, that's for sure. I guess if they ever reach the establishment level, they'll die because nobody will want them. Harvey Kurtzman said that things that rebel usually do well. Then when they become successful, they're not as rebellious.

Well, to become successful, you have to satisfy the majority. Have you seen any stuff by Richard Corben?

He's great. I tried to get him to work for us, but he said that at the moment he was busy.
Undergrounders open all sorts of doors. I'm not against them There's a lot of good quality in them. A lot of talent too. It's just how it's directed.

Have you seen Steve Ditko's Mr. A?

It's interesting.

Would you ever consider running something like that in a comic?

No. Anyway, Steve is into a completely different thing now.

Has Kinney control made any changes at DC?

It opened up doors. They're quite good. They want to do lots of new stuff. They let you do what you want, but if it doesn't work, it's your neck. I think that's fair.

You've previously stated that comics will be used as educational tools in the future. What's happened with Edugraphics?

They're starting to take hold now. They're being tested.

In closing, what format do you think comics will be taking in the future?

They'll be changing, that's for sure.

In another interview, you said that you thought comics wouldbe hard cover in the future.Would there be a market for that?

Yeah.

Who?

The new Superman book sold out its first printing and they're making a second printing of it. It sells at ten bucks.

But that's mainly reprints and so it appeals to the nostalgic oldsters who can say, "Gee, I remember this story from when when I was kid."

Maybe. I don't think so. Kirby Unleashed is selling like a bandit.

That's to fans. It only went on sale through the comics recently.

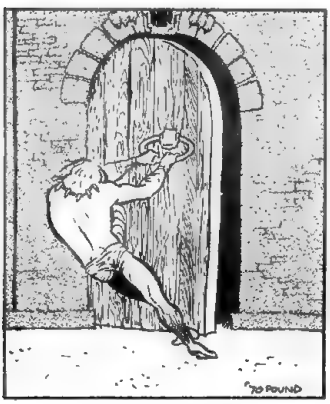
I think quality pays off.

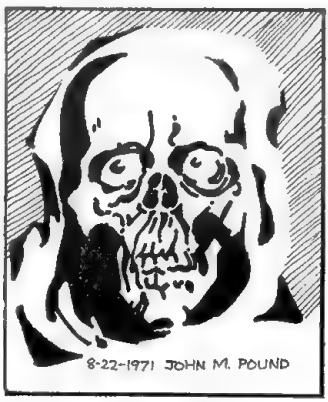
If you ever went to a hardcover format, do you think you would have art like that used in "Little Annie Fanny"?

Somewhat. Harvey Kurtzman is a genius.

What about those adult characters you tried in '68, all of which were flops? Even Green Lantern/Green Arrow failed.

Maybe the package has to change. That could be part of it.





Although this interview is obviously outdated, we have decided to present it in its original form in order to show Carmine's original feelings before the recent upheavals in the comics industry.

A client has a product to sell. He comes to an agency. They are responsible for advertising the product. The agency will call me, the artist, up, with an idea of what they want to do. Usually they leave it up to the artist to tell it as he sees fit, in his own way, working with a script. .

ADS &

ANIMATION

Mort Drucker

(as told to Neal Pozner)

For example, let's take the Vote toothpaste commercial. The art director had drawn three pictures of different stages which he gave me to work with. These comprehensives (rough sketches) had no personality; they were just rough stick figures. This was the direction in which the client wanted me to go, and I was to establish characters and a sequence of drawings. I had to break it down to six pencil drawings, one of which you see reproduced here. When I submitted these six drawings, I hadn't heard any voice tapes. They were undecided about one of the characters so they played the voice for me. As a result of the tape, one character was changed from the one you see here. It fit the voice, another im—portant part. After those drawings were accepted, I did twenty more drawings in various stages. When they were accepted, two of them were done in a final, color version. All these drawings were given to Focus, an animation house, who gave them to a staff of illustrators. They don't create anything, but just fill in the steps in—between on cells. They don't necessarily all have to be full drawings. Some can be one part of the body moving. They're traced over a lightboard. For a one—minute commercial like this, about eight hundred or so drawings are required. It's the same basic principle as the flip books; each picture moves a little more.

A good commercial depends wholly on the animators. They can ruin it or make it successful. It's very important that a cartoon flows well. There are some animators who try to cut corners and ruin the flow. The finished version looks choppy and the animators do a poor job in copying an artists' style. As a result, the commercial becomes hacked up. Focus is a top animation house and I was pleased with the finished version in this case. The actual commercial was run on Joey Bishop's old show and a couple of other places. It did very well.

This sequence was for Utica Beer. Henny Youngman's voice was used and they wanted me to come up with a character that would portray him in simple form. My intricate style has to be simplified for TV animation. The more intricate it is, the harder it is to animate.

I met Youngman at a Mad party and that was the only association I ever had with him. I remember he made a big fuss over my wife.

The final was very successful. The client really liked it. It plays in upstate New York, where Utica Beer is very popular. Because of this, I've never seen the final version.

They have a way of testing commercials, using a rating system from one to fifteen. This commercial got the highest rating, fifteen. I did some ads for Party Tyme mix that ran in some magazines; a series of six different drawings. The first one got a fifteen rating. The same agency tried the same thing, this time by Al Jaffee, for another client. Passport Scotch. The Party Tyme Client got uptight about it, because they felt that theirs' was first and the agency shouldn't have handled the Scotch ad in the same way. They stop-

ped their account and left the agency. Three of the series saw print. Those ad agencies pull some big boners sometimes.

I did another commercial for ARM and HAMMER. We animated the . hand on the package. A little germ ran across the screen and the hand stomped it. There were two thirty-second commercials like that done by the same animation house. That also did pretty well, from what I understand.

I was working on a Saturday morning cartoon series that fell through . for Steve Krantz Productions, under Ralph Bachi. They produced the Fritz the Cat film. It was supposed to be all about animals. They're a good and successful outfit, but the show was never bought. The picture that was originally presented to them is this issue's special poster.

Comic ART?

Howard Campbell

There is no such article as the "comic book art form." Merely because comics are not art. Instead, they are poorly drawn, written, edited, and packaged attempts at creative expression.

While a few of the "artists" in the comics present to us good composition, that is all they do. All the pencillers in the field lack any sort of understanding of anatomy. Their figures are abortions of the human body. Foremost of these offenders are Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. All of their figures are grossly incorrectly drawn to the point of disbelief. To compound this problem of poor rendering, the comics have decided to employ substandard inkers. Instead of improving on the penciller's work by making it more realistic, the inkers further misrepresent the human figure by using absurdly fat brush strokes. Going beyond this, most comic book artists lack any sort of craft. And without craft, there is no chance for art. Most artists have little formal training, and their work shows it. Besides their lack of understanding of anatomy, most artists know little of spatial relationships and other such knowledge of which all artists are required to be masters.

But this is not the only reason why comic book "art" is not art. Such deficiencies in craft could be overlooked if the artists in the comics experimented. Many forms of creative expression which have lacked any real craft have still been considered art; mainly because they have innovated. There is, however, very little experimenting present in the comics. Most artists are content to draw the same figures and backgrounds year after banal year. The few examples of experimentation in comics have been borrowed from the films, and thus, these experiments are neither new nor experimental in the true sense of the words. So then, if comic book "art" is not art, what is it? Comic book "art" is a form of unexperimental commercial art which lacks a good deal of craft. Then; it is merely a flimsy means of self-expression. And that is all.

While the art in comics displays at least a slight amount of craft, the writing in comics is wholly inadequate. Weak plotting, weak characterization, and weak dialogue; all are typical of comics. Although Stan Lee did indeed raise the writing standards of comic books, it is not anything really worth mentioning. He lifted the level of comic book writing from that of a children's daytime television show to that of a soap opera. Same difference. To say that comic book writing is anywhere near adult is stretching things a bit much.

Perhaps the largest problem in comic book writing is that of terribly weak characterization. The people portrayed in comics are no more "real" than my typewriter. None of the comic book characters show real emotions of any sort. Instead, they are all the same lifeless figures who are merely used as a vehicle to lead into a fight and nothing more. What little good characterization there is in comics is often vanquished by incompetant editors who switch around writers and artists like bowling pins..

The dialogue in comics is not much better. Most of it is pure emotionalism, wrapped in trite cliches or just plain foolishness. A common line such as, "I could recognize that grunt of his anywhere!" is enough of a testimonial, if ever there need be one, to the trite, illiterate dialogue in the comics.

Although in the past few years, with the emergence of Roy Thomas, comics have become increasingly poetic, it is clear that the comic book writers are not good enough to live up to what they are attempting. Such captions as, "Soft. The sounds of the night are soft, like the rattling of garbage cans." shows us most vulgarly that under the new wave of poetic wordiness, the writing in the comics is still as sophomoric and banal as ever. As Stan Lee so obnoxiously states,"Nuff said."

Another failing in the comic book industry is that of poor editors. In addition to their lacking a total command of the English language, which is normally required of any editor, most editors have little knowledge of formal art techniques, thus resulting in the chronic misuse of many of the pencillers and inkers in the business. Instead of understanding their craft, it seems that most editors are more concerned with selling their product, no matter how poor it is, and with giving their publications good public relations. In short, most editors are businessmen instead of editors.

While most of the creators and the collectors of comics refuse to accept that comics are a banal, cheap, form of entertainment, the publishers know this fact all too well. They realize that the writing and the art work in comics is not good, and it is because of this that they pay such "minimal" rates to the people working in the field. But they aren't really minimal at all. The artists and writers are getting exactly what they deserve for their efforts: chicken feed. The publishers' realization that comics are indeed a cheap creative form is also expressed in their packaging of the books. Surely if comics were a bona-fide art form the publishers wouldn't subject them to the poor printing, coloring and paper stock that is being used. Instead, they would print them by the finest printing processes and on the highest grade paper. But, they realize that the comics are not an art form, and they present them accordingly.

In light of these conclusions, it remains a mystery to me as to why so many people profess admiration of the beauty of the comic book media. They're cheap, dismal, poorly executed attempts at art and nothing more. And yet, so many people are "fans." It seems that many fans are primarily interested in the art in comics; and this is their excuse for enjoying this juvenile product. My suggestion; if you are interested in Art go to museums and experience Michealangelo and Dali and Picasso, stop wasting your time studying Kirby and Steranko and Adams. Why waste your time with novices when you can view the masters? If you enjoy the writing in comics, read the classics instead, and see what good writing really is all about. And, if your prime interest in comics is in its composition and story telling, study the films; they do it better.

There is a wide spectrum of art forms in America, but the graphic story medium is, sadly enough, not one of them. And, the quicker all of you realize this, the more appreciative you will be of the true art forms in this country.

Howard Campbell is a Chicago University graduate who, in addition to writing many short stories and novels, is a serious student of all the creative forms in America.

KATO '71

Our visit to the offices of Mad Magazine, conducted on June 29, 1971, found us face—to—face with a minority of the talented individuals that contributeto the last(and most successful) child of EC Publications. In other words, while 4:30 P.M. in the middle of the week is not the best time to meet one's favorite Mad artists and writers, it does give one a very good indication of just when the rats desert the sinking ship.

So we found ourselves

NEAR TO THE MADDING CROWD

by Martin Pasko and Alan Brennert

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One of those hardy individuals paid to remain there was associate editor Jerry DeFuccio, who greeted us at the door, somewhat taken back by the size of our entourage. Nevertheless, he braved himself for the ordeal to come, and attempted to explain the development of a typical MAD article, after ushering us into what we took to be an office.

"We use a lot of the same reliable writers, specifically because they are in the Metropolitan areas," explained DeFuccio. "We have to rely on a certain clique or group . . . from anywhere from ten to a dozen. We have about five writers who went out to the West Coast, now working on shows out there; we're fortunate enough to have them still contribute when they have the time." Then there are those that DeFuccio refers to as the "old—timers"—those people who "generally think in our idiom and. . . produce the type of material that we can use." Those in the metropolitan areas, such as a Frank Jacobs and Dick DeBartolo, "might come in once a month" for a story conference with editor Al Feldstein, associate editor Nick Meglin and DeFuccio.

"You see, up front, initially, we don't encourage a fully—developed script," continued DeFuccio. "We want a premise for every proposed article. . . a brief paragraph, and it states what the writer wants to say in his proposed article. We also will require two or three examples, just to show that it can build up a head of steam, that there's some momentum there and that the idea can be sustained." Should all parties agree as to the idea's potential, the writer is given the go—ahead to do a finished script. "When the script comes back," says DeFuccio, "we all read it. We talk abut the various strengths of different segments of the script. . . the parts we think should be cut out. . . the parts that can be strengthened." Other considerations are bandied about—"Is the ending flat or is it good? Is it a good exit line?"—and when the editors come to an agreement, the script is handed over to editor Feldstein for the actual editing.

The first step for Feldstein is a "pagination layout" (a page break down) to decide upon the length of the article. "If it's real meaty," DeFuccio reveals, "it might go six or seven pages. If it's a filler, then you get in and out with two or three pages; you say your bit and then that's it." Feldstein types up the dialogue, which is then sent to the production department, which in turn sends it to the type house to be set. "Then we will pull finished proofs on it, and then all those balloons are enlarged double-size. We give those photo stats to the artist (the artist is the lastman on the job) and he just pastes it down in the various panels. We give him a mechanical to follow, so he knows where the placement is." The actual creative work on each story for any given issue finished, "The elements are combined in the production office" in such a way as to "represent each artist so we get a different overall look to the book." Although many have remarked of the scrupulously-maintained satiric balance of Mad, this is only a secondary consideration; the prime consideration in the selection of material for the 48 page magazine is the selection of as many varying art styles as possible, so as to make the book visually diverse.

In addition to those scripts written by Mad's regular stable of writers, DeFuccio and company recieve at least fifty scripts a day from sources outside the magazine. "We welcome all sorts of material. . ." he admits, "if they are capable of capturing the so-called MAD "flavor." But while DeFuccio is fully capable of detecting that flavor, he is unable to define it. "Don't ask me what it is," he urges, "As you read through [a script] there's something that reaches out and grabs you, and that's. . .the MAD flavor; and if it doesn't have it, you just don't react."

"A NEW HUMOR IN THE LAND"

"Flavor" notwithstanding, there is no doubt that Mad's approach to humor has changed over the years, perhaps even, DeFuccio concedes, out of necessity. "We've decided that there's a new humor in the land today. Say ten or a dozen years ago, or even back to the fifties, forties, and thirties, American humor has been a laugh not at what's happening to you but what's happening to the other guy. . . But today, humor has changed. It's humor that you can relate to. It's truth humor. When it happened to you, you possibly couldn't laugh at it; it might have been even tragic. But in retrospect, you can say, "Oh, that's so true, because that happened to me," and I think that's why a lot of articles that really hit home or hit a nerve are the most successful. . . . our whole concept of humor in this country has changed."

With such a change in the American sense of humor has come a reduction in the number of things once considered sacrosanct. DeFuccio maintains, however, that "We do deal within the realm of good taste, because we're essentially a family magazine to a great degree. We have some ideas that are great ideas," he explains, but, being of a questionable nature, they are discarded; "we'd rather not use them, then, than be offensive."

With the discovery of the new brand of humor came the development of a social conscience for Mad Magazine, one which leads readers to suspect that Mad, on occasion, will forego an obvious gag to defer to an opportunity for serious social commentary. DeFuccio admits that "we've made statements because we realize that in today's climate you can't be just ha-ha anymore." He points out that "before, MAD was ahead of the world. . . we used to project. And all of a sudden the world got so insane it caught up with MAD. We prophesized that if you didn't buckle your seat belt before turning your ignition key, you could get a mild shock; last year, Popular Mechanics showed it came to be an actuality."
All of which means, DeFuccio jokes (or does he?), that "we've got to get out in front of the world again."

"HUMOR IN A JUGULAR VEIN"

"The first 'comic' comic book," as the ads went, had its beginnings as an economy move.
According to MAD creator Harvey Kurtzman, MAD was "something that I could do without research. We were doing Two-Fisted Tales and Front Line Combat with incredible research. We'd go down on submarines, and up in planes, and it just got to be too much. So I decided I'd come up with an idea for a comic book that I didn't have to do research on. And that's really how MAD was born, because I didn't have to leave the room to do humor."

DeFuccio, in the Fifties working with Kurtzman on his war books, recalls the research not quite so fondly. "I went out, down, submerged out on Long Island Sound on the U.S.S. Guardfish." he recalls, "and this was unheard of to write a comic book story." Kurtzman, DeFuccio claims, was given "tremendous latitude" by EC publisher Bill Gaines, "even though Al Feldstein was, is, superior. Harvey never worked as hard as Al did. Al produced one story a day, and Harvey had this tremendous luxury of going to libraries and air bases." DeFuccio claims that Kurtzman had a "superior attitude" about his war stories, likening them to "little gems that kept being polished and polished" whereas he allegedly felt that Feldstein was "sort of batting them out one a day," and that "that horror stuff was just out-and-out fiction."

MAD would not be here today if Harvey had stuck with MAD," DeFuccio states. "It was only that Al really got it on schedule. You never knew when Mad was coming out when it went from the comic book into the slick magazine; you never never knew when it was going to appear, because Harvey could not adhere to a schedule. He would get an idea and he would work up an article and set it down in type, and overnight he would have a change of heart, and the next day he would pull the story and rewrite it, and send it down for type again, and he might do it a third time. We were getting like three type bills for one story, and that's no way to put out a magazine."

Kurtzman split with MAD in 1956 in order to work with Hugh Hefner on the latter's short-lived fifty-cent humor magazine Trump, taking with him Will Elder and Jack Davis, "sotto voce" as DeFuccio puts it. The first few issues of the Feldstein-edited MAD saw DeFuccio in a "continuity" capacity, present Art Director John Putnam as Production Manager, and "Nick Meglin" (now Nick Meglin) listed as head of a rather ambiguously titled department, "Ideas." Norman Mingo did several of the early MAD slick covers, and was replaced for a period of several years by Frank Kelly Freas (now a standby at Analog) as chief cover artist. Since 1963, the white-haired Mingo has returned to prominence as MAD cover artist, occasionally giving way to the likes of Jack Davis or Al Jaffee.

Why was the comic book MAD chosen, out of the many sophisticated war/horror/ crime/ SF EC titles , to advance to slick magazine format? "Well, I guess I think MAD was relatively innocuous," DeFuccio muses. "It wasn't considered an offender. The horror books and the crime books were really considered as 'offenders'—I say that in quotes because I don't think they were. I think they were very well done, and it was just the rest of the very parasitic so-called imitators that jumped on the bandwagon.———One company was putting out twenty "horror for horror's sake" to our six or eight, and they called attention to us. We were going along very nicely with our own little sort of specialized clique. Our readership was a little more intelligent than the usual comic book reader."

And just as the EC titles had a fringe readership of adults and others above the average comic book–reading age of the time, so MAD has pulled in a phenomenal audience not restricted, as critics have charged, to twelve–year–olds. Presently the book is the fifth largest magazine in the nation, surpassed in circulation only by Family Circle, Women's Wear Daily, TV Guide, and Playboy, and it is distributed in such countries as England, Holland, France, and Swedan. Whether the responsibility for its success should go to Al Feldstein or Harvey Kurtzman is a moot point––but there is little doubt the someone must be doing something right.

MISGUIDED TOUR DEPARTMENT

Over the years, unscrupulous rumor–mongers have spread many vicious stories to the effect that the offices of MAD magazine are not offices of the respectable, dignified, efficient and businesslike type one would expect to find on Madison Avenue, but in fact strongly resemble the day room at Bellevue. We feel it is our duty to inform the public that all of those dirty, nasty, unconfirmed rumors are all absolutly ,positively,and categorically TRUE!! As proof, we offer the following representation of the treatment we recieved there:

(With all due respects to the Marx Brothers)

DAVE COCKRUM

WELL, FANCY MEET
YOU HERE !!

To Neal
with Best Regards
Syd Shores
(with apologies to National)

279

EXIT LAUGHING

on leaving fandom

by BERNIE BUBNIS

"I'm leaving fandom—and that's final!"

My good ol' fan buddy, Ronn Fradkin, jumped to my side. Tears streaked down his cheeks as he pleaded,

"No Bernie, you can't leave it all behind you. The fun, the games, the cutthroating; and especially think of how you'll be missed!"

Ronn and I looked at each other almost instantly and we both mouthed the same question, "Bernie who?"

"Bernie who?" was a good question. I had been in comic fandom since the early issues of Dick Lupoff's Xero was featuring "All in Color For A Dime." I printed a number of zines with my own money and distributed them free (Super Hero Calendar in '62, four issues of American Man, and eight issues of Spanglerized). I also printed a number of zines with other people's money and distributed them at very high prices (Comic Heroes Revisited numbers one and two and Outside numbers one through four)I got up a few bucks from interested fans in '64, coughed up mucho bucks of my own and threw together the first N.Y. Comicon.

Fradkin tried to comfort me,

"Look, pal, we've had a lot of really great fun in fandom. We've fought the battle of the Jerry Bails Empire trying to control N.Y. fandom, and won. We've stuck by our beliefs; we've walked together through the terrors and pitfalls of youth; we've laughed in the face of danger; we've... by the way, Bubs, since you're leaving fandom I'll take all those comics off your hands."

So much for my close friendship with Ronn Fradkin.

I was a boy/man in turmoil. Where could I turn? I needed answers to my questions, "Why fandom?" There was only one person to turn to at a crucial time such as this—the infamous Artie Tripp.

Artie Tripp is the same wheeler dealer who printed hisown Mickey Mouse watch faces, placed them into cheap Swiss cases, and sold them to dealers for one hundred dollars a piece. The same Artie Tripp who always bought a dealers table at the early Comicons. During the Con he would raise a big fuss that someone had robbed his complete set of All Stars. During the ensuing commotion, Tripp would lift choice comics off other dealer's tables as they were busy trying to help find his All Stars. Yes, Art Tripp, a great fan in the Rogofsky/John Dillinger tradition.

My head was held low as I trudged into the Tripp residence. Artie would definately know what to do. Good ol' Artie.

"I'm glad you're leaving fandom, Bubnis, you're the only person I know who's a bigger crook than I am. Wanna buy some Polaroid shots of Supergirl?"

Good 'ol Artie. I left Artie's house knowing I had nowhere to turn.

Walking towardsmy car, I noticed another great N.Y. fan popping the hubcaps off my Chevy—good ol' Len Wein.

Len was the very same fellow Ronn and I banned from the first comicon. We mistakenly believed him to be a crook. He showed up anyway to distributedittoed sheets telling his side of the story--and he also stole a few comics.

"Len, I'm thinking of leaving fandom and I want your advice. I know we've had differences in the past, but please forget them and help me find an answer to this dilemma."

Len, sporting his usual frown and ruffled brows, shook his head slowly as if to say "I'll help," and proceeded to shove his jack handle into my mouth and out the back of my neck.

Two weeks later I woke up in Good Samaritan Hospital, Bayshore. I watched as a doctor walked to the foot of my bed. He looked at me and gave me a reassuring grin. His hand propped up the medical chart hanging from the end rail of my bed. His eyes opened wide, his face squeezed up a little, and he said,

"Bernie who?"

I not only left fandom that day--Blue Cross cancelled my policy also.

PREFACE

The words 'con man' seem to be reserved for a special breed of deviate. The fellow who works the carnies and circuses across the country, the fellow who sells you your next used car, even the fellow who lives in the White House. They all are 'con men' of a sort and each dangerous in his own element.

The "Mr. X" of the following article is a 'con man' by profession. He started his career years ago when we were both kids on the lower East Side of New York. We used to pull Murphys (a Murphy is selling some rube a whore and then disappearing with the sucker's money and not delivering the hooker) My parents escaped from the neighborhood and opened by mind to new outlets of 'growing up'. He lived there till he was twenty.

Today Mr. X makes his living from crooked deals and shady living; but he is a fan. He collects comics, reads fanzines and even contributes an LoC or two. He has been a fan ever since I invited him to the first Comic Convention in 1964. He returns to the cons regularly (recently he has also attended cons in other states) and fleeces 'em clean of whatever he light-fingers.

The following article is Part 1 of a series from Mr. X. It is also a challenge from a man I consider very sick. He has asked me to make sure these articles see print so everyone will know how to recognize him. Or in other words, Mr. X challenges you to catch him!

I've accepted his offer to help him get these articles published for my own reasons. To WARN you to be on the lookout at fan gatherings. You work hard for whatever treasures you bring with you——make sure people like Mr. X don't fleece you. It's important we all realize nuts like X do exist—— measure his words well and catch him——for his and your sakes.

[] Bernie Bubnis

GUERILLA WARFARE AT COMIC CONVENTIONS

BY 'MR. X'

Guerilla Warfare? Comic Conventions? Did you read that right?

Sure you did, and I'm here to explain the best way to attend your next comic convention.

I never pay any entrance fee at conventions and this year's NY Comicon was no different. As I turned the corner before the admissions table I flashed a wallet high in the air. I let it slip open to reveal a shiny metal badge. As I neared the table I flipped it closed and talked quickly. "Do you have a Hugo Gernsback registered here?" The young girl flipped cards, shuffled papers, looked through manila envelopes and generally lost her cool. I hoped Hugo wasn't registered. This famous inventor and first editor of Amazing Stories had unfourtunately passed on. She said he wasn't registered but I could talk with a convention official if I wished. I twitched my lip, tucked my Lone Ranger badge (honest) back into my jacket and said, "I'll just see for myself. If Lieutenant Ames arrives, tell him I'm inside."

This stunt only works if you wear a jacket and plan to use the gag only on that day. I'm only there to steal——so in my case I only needed one day, but more about this in a later paragraph.

The next goof is an easy one to pull off, but you need a friend to work with you. I've pulled this off on a number of occasions and the results are always rewarding. Your friend should be carrying a portable tape recorder and keep referring to you as "Mr. Manning" (or whatever absent pro you know will not show up). We picked Russ Manning because he lives in California and not too many folks knows what Russ looks like. It's easier in other states where less pros are present——a full beard and you could assume anyone's identity. Once a few fans realize that Russ Manning is standing near them the autograph hunters come out of the woodwork. They don't care if you're the Boston Strangler——they just want your autograph. The barrageof fans usually leads to a dinner invitation and a good meal in the hotel restaurant.

Thievery is a gas. The only warning here is don't steal comic books. Everyone and his brother—in—law is keeping an eye on the oldies in this category. I'm partial to large tag items like comic character watches. Dealers of this merchandise love to talk shop and if you are working with a friend you can grab at least three watches at a sitting. They are big tag items (many costing over thirty dollars) so the dealer wants you to see his wares and not hassle you so you leave before a purchase. Also, watch collectors are not considered thieves and a little studying of watch history will help to cover your tracks. The dealer thinks you know your beans and real collectors don't steal——they trade. Talk trade while your friend cops choicer items than the ones you are focusing attention on.

There are lots of kids at these cons and that gives me a chance to do alittle flim—flamming. I buy a load of girlie mags at a used book store and then bring them to the con with me. I lay them on a dealer's table while I look through some of his wares. Almost immediately the top sexy cover has caught a young 'un's eye and then I get a cut of all that extra convention money he

saved all year. I don't ask any identification of age and I make a good buck on the mark-up. You can pull this money maker all day if you work quickly and keep your prices fair enough so no one raises a stink.

Aside from a huster: The NY Comicon has gotten so large that this year's event had a couple of guest stars. Hookers (N.Y. ladies of pleasure – – yours) frequent all conventions of sizable attendance in town. They are tipped by hotel personnel, but some bell boy pulled a bummer this year. Three that I spotted were strolling around by the admissions table outside the dealers' rooms. The hard looks on their paste faces didn't loosen a bit when they saw what kind of convention they had walked into.

Two fans met by the ent5ance to trade stills. One of the girls kneeled next to a pudgy thirties–type fellow and admired his choice of stills.

She said, "How's you like to come over to my sister's place for a while, hey honey?"

He lifted his jowly face and puffed, "Does she have any Republics?" She eased herself back into the night and with her next pickup goes the message of the N.Y. Comicon.

the great atomic aftermath and fresh fruit festival

j. ian schumeister

IT'S OVER! THE WAR'S OVER!
I'M THE LAST MAN LEFT ON EARTH! IT'S ALL MINE!
THE PROPHECY WAS TRUE: "THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH!"
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT!
INTERNAL REVENUE
SINCE WE'RE THE LAST TWO MEN ALIVE, I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A QUESTION.
NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG, BUT...
ARE YOU A REPUBLICAN OR A DEMOCRAT?
WHAT'S THAT?
I FOUND A CAN OF BEANS.
WANT A SHARE?
SOCK! BASH!
ONE MUST FIGHT CREEPING SOCIALISM WHEREVER ONE FINDS IT!

MEET BUBS

Dear Neal;

Here is the completed interview.

If you wish, I can supply copies of some of my early zines——if you want to illustrate the interview with any of my early work. I can also supply pictures of me and the missus screwing in bed if you wish to show some scenes of my personal life. I can also send you a pair of my first shoes (bronzed) if you'd like to feature a picture of these (I'll work with you 100% on this, Neal.) How about changing the zine's name to Bubnis Comics and feature a full portrait of me on the cover?

If you need any more suggestions, I'll be glad to give 'em.

Thanks——and bestest:

—— Bubs ——

David Chamberlain said in Nuff Said Newsletter number 3, "I was going to do a Bernie Bubnis checklist, but then I couldn't remember what Bernie Bubnis ever did, even though he says he is a pro." Just exactly what have you done professionally?

Who the hell is David Chamberlain? It's just this type of thinking that turns me off to many fans. Here this clown hasn't seen my name in a comic book, so he thinks I don't exist. Well, I don't like to reveal my "Professional" background, but I guess I'd better put these rumors to rest. I started as copy boy with the old New York Herald Tribune. My by–line (appearing after Harvey Pike's) was featured in a series of articles on small–time crime in the Tribune. From there, I free–lanced to the men's mags. I wrote any number of stories under various house by–lines. I have written copy for Doyle, Dane, and Bernbach advertising agency. I'm presently working for Time–Life. So who the hell is David Chamberlain?

You told me before that this was the first time you were ever interviewed. You mean to say no one ever approached you about it before?

Well, I've always nursed a secret desire to be interviewed——ever since they kept overlooking me at Gordon Love's Rocket's Blast/Comicollector. Eh, let me explain that a little better. I was one of the first seven or so young 'uns to write Love in regard to his letterin an early Mystery in Space. With this response, he issued a carbon copied 2 pager called The Rocket's Blast. I think two of my stories appeared in the first issue——he paid me 25 cents apiece. A few issues later, he went to mimeo and the zine began to take shape. I possessed a ditto machine (the in way in those days to reproduce art and script) so I copied the origin of Atom out of the current issue, ran it off on ditto, and it was included in RB as the first artwork supplement. I also ran off an original feature of my own——"Wanted Dead or Alive" which featured my drawings of the popular fans of the day——G.B. Love, Steve Perrin, Rick Weingroff, and a few others. This took two installments. Then came the "Spotlight on the Pros" series, which contained humourous articles about my visiting pros like Infantino, Ditko, and the whole bunch. I also did a few things called "Professional Ponderings" about local pro–gossip. Another series ran for quite some time in the RB——self–written features on noted fans who worked for the RB. I guess I must have watched at least forty issues go by and Love never requested a feature on me once. This is not to say that I'm still not waiting for a letter from him. I figure there were a few other folks in my way on the RB–CC roster and I expect a request from him shortly. But until then, I'm happy to be interviewed.

What do you think of the pro work of your friends (Wein, Weiss, etc.)?

Len Wein was the editor of a pleasing fanzine called Aurora. He fancied himself as an artist. . . but his talent was very well hidden. He printed alot of my artwork in Aurora and I guess neither of us realized we were heading in the other direction. I'm not thrilled with much in comic book writing, so I've no real opinion on the sparse work Wein has done. Weiss did some work for my '64 N.Y. Convention Booklet and the '62 Super Hero Calender. In those days I classified him as the only fan artist with style. I loved his old work. He is competant today and I expect he will get much bet–

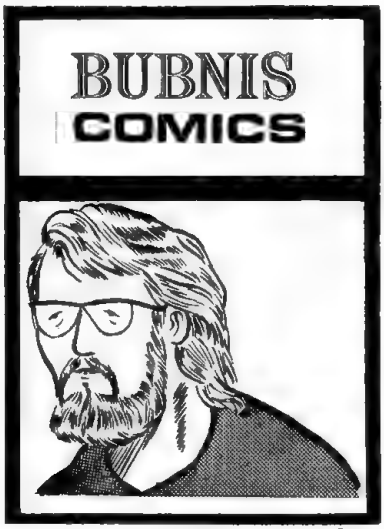
What was the first fanzine that printed your work?

Well, I was in science fiction fandom for a while before Xero and Alter Ego came onto the scene. In this fandom, I did some stories, articles, and artwork for Buck Coulson's Yandro and a number of others(Realm of Fantasy, Twilight Zine, et. al.). For comic fandom, I issued my own zine, Comics Heroes Revisted a few months afterAlter Ego 1, so there wasn't anyone else to write for in those days. CHR 1 had a good article on the Sub–Mariner/Torch battles and it also reprinted an original Human Torch advertisement from the fifties. I traced this onto the ditto master myself. I also remember the person at Marvel who gave me permission at the time, a gal named Trudy Ross. CHR 2 had a long article on comic history by Rick Weingroff. About this time, I went to interview Jack Kirby. I sent a sample of the completed interview to Biljo White (for publication in the early Comicollector). I was thinking of writing an article around the interview, but White published it as is in CC 9. There are a bunch of other zines that carried opinion articles and artwork by me but I don't recall any of them.

Can you explain briefly why you left fandom a few years ago, this time the truth (see "Exit Laughing," in this ish)?

I grew up in fandom and I was getting tired of it. That was

"HOW ABOUT CHANGING THE ZINE'S NAME TO BUBNIS COMICS AND FEATURING A PORTRAIT OF ME ON THE COVER?"



before all the new blood was pumped into it, such as the new areas of photo—offset, the great new artistic talent, and some really dynamic fanzines.

How and why did you get back into fandom?

Gordon Love asked me to contribute some type of article on early fandom. Instead, I wrote a long letter to him about some subjects that might make a good article. He split the letter in half and printed two installments of "Don't Look Back, Honey, Your Slip is Showing." Good ol' Gordon Love strikes lightning into my fannish light again! He's one of my favorite people and wow, do I admire his energy.

While on the subject of fans, who else do you admire in fandom?

I like some of the new fan editors like Groth, Wilson, Light, and of course, Pozner. The art picture has really picked up, but I hate to see it taking such a dominating influence on fandom. I feel we are in store for a reversal of policies and the fan writer will be taking the forefront soon. I don't get too many fanzines, so I really can't comment.

Do you have any interests outside of fandom?

Rape, sodomy, and murder. Outside of these hobbies, I'm like any other normal comic book reader.

How about a little info on the first NY Comic Convention that you organized?

I could go on all day with a subject like the con, but I'll sum it up quickly. There are so may things that went on behind the scenes for the first ever comic convention that I'm trying to write up a long (twenty—thirty handwritten pages of notes so far) article about the whole silly trip. Let it suffice to say my cohort Ronn Fradkin lent a supporting shoulder as did Artie Tripp. Ethan Roberts got us the hall(Workman's Circle, 4th Av., and 14th st.) and about one hundred and fifty folks showed up. Steve Ditko dropped by and Flo Steinberg, Stan Lee's secretary, came by on her own time to enjoy the gathering. Lee sent over a fellow named Dave Twedt to answer questions relating to Marvel. Marvel supported us every inch of the way. DC stuck original art in our ears and told us to get lost. Tom Gill (artist for Lone Ranger) also stopped in to chat and give a speech. It only lasted a couple of hours, but it proved to a (at that time) disbelieving fandom that a convention was possible. The Academy of Comic Book Art and Sciences (Jerry Bails and company) spent the rest of the year trying to discredit our con, since they were planning one for 1965—and everybody knows Bails does every thing first. Some folk at the first con were Phil Seuling, Howard Rogofsky, Bill Thailing, Claude Held, Dick Lupoff Larry Ivie, and a whole bunch of the greatest folks in the world.

What do you think of the present cons?

They're run very well and I try to get to at least one day of activity each year. The hucksters' tables are filled with goodies and, although I've heard it all a thousand times, the speeches and panels still manage to hold my interest.

Do you ever think you'll become really active in fandom again,maybe even to the point of publishing your own zine?

I'd love to publish a zine about my newest hobby, the original Dead End Kids. I've been dying to get something into print about the Kids for years. As far as comic zines go, someone just wrote me about a special mag devoted to Bob Powell. This intrigues me and it might even force me back into publishing and editing.

Do you still buy comics? Any favorites?

Yes, I still pick 'em up. The Kirby stuff is easy and enjoyable reading. I also dig some of O'Neil's Batman sages. And, of course, I always get a kick out of a book illoed by Neal Adams.

Who has influenced your style?

My writing style is poor, so I won't blame anyone for that, but I've always felt my humorous approach to things is due to Steve Allen. I've always admired his wit and humor, so much so that I've patterned certain traits of my own after his youth. I suppose I retain a few of these up to thisd day and just don't realize it.

Do you still feel the same way about the end of comics as you did when you wrote "All Hail! The Comic Book is Dead!" which appeared in The Collector 21?

Did I write that? You must have confused me with another Bernie Bubnis.

Here's your last chance— your chance to end this interview in your favor and get the last word. Do you have anything to say?

Well, I appreciate the fact that you felt an article on me was worth your justifying the time to put it together. Comic fandom has been a ball for me. I've got a billion great memories and I've enjoyed sharing some of them with your readers. Thank you.

Art by Bubnis with Pozner

THE ETERNAL SOLDIER
IT SEEM LIKE THIS RAIN BEEN GOIN' ON FOREVER....
IT DON'T SEEM LIKE IT EVER GONNA STOP....
LIKE A LOTTA THINGS IN THIS WORLD....
JUS' GO ON FOREVER...
...AN' EVER....
©1972, Newsday

GRAPHIC OPINION

Report by Neal Pozner

Graphic Opinion is a political comic strip currently running in the Long Island paper, Newsday, every Sunday. It was originally proposed and conceived by Tom Plate, who was editor of the Viewpoints section (Editorials and political opinion) as well as the Sunday "Ideas" section, (Newsday's Journal of Opinion) at that time.

Plate came up with this political comic strip idea for the new Sunday Newsday. He saw two purposes in it: 1. To attract readers, and 2. to have good art in addition to good articles in the paper. He thought the best way of combining the two was in the comic strip format, with a political or sociological comment.

Plate pointed out, "What can you do graphically in a newspaper? You can have photographs, but Life tried that, and it failed because people watch television now. You can have illustrations. Newsday has a lot of them. Fine, but the illustrations are secondary to the text. How do you make an illustration of primary importance? well, one of the most popular features in any paper is the comics. Take the comics concept, give it a political bent, and put it in your political section (Which supposedly your more issue-aware, politically-minded people are reading)."

"Having a strip like that is good. People can take only so many editorials and signed opinions. You get tired of reading. If you come in with something that expresses opinions dramatically and differently, it has enormous potential for grabbing a reader, because of this very fact."

Tom Plate orignally came up with the idea when a friend of his, an editor of Esquire, did a feature on the new comics. Plate talked with him about novel features that could be included in the new Sunday Newsday that hadn't been done a million times by everyone else. His friend suggested Plate contact the artists, with the view towards a political strip suitable for a middle class audience newspaper.

He wasn't looking for artists of the type that work for underground comix, because Plate felt they would be over the head of most of Newsday's Long Island, middle-class families. They were forced to look for very solid concepts, the art of which you would EXPECT to see in a comic strip. For example, Plate said he could have done a strip called "Racist Pig," and have him sitting with his beer belly in front of his color TV in his split-level home. "You can do that," said Plate, "And accept the 50,000 cancellations that come along with it." The comic just HAD to be what suburbanites expected it to be.

Plate chose several artists at Marvel because his friend at Esquire had worked with them and said they were very fast, an important consideration for newspapers. An additional factor was the budget, which necessitated hiring young artists who were trying to make their mark in the industry and would be happy to make a little extra money. His friend also though they were competant, so he looked at the things in Esquire, and thought some of the artists were close enough to what people expect from comics that they could respond to them, as opposed to other more experimental artists.

He called up Herb Trimpe and told him what was wanted: four or five recurring characters in a political, sociological comic strip. Herb then came up with six or seven artists. Some had ideas that Plate didn't respond to, so were never used. Some, like Trimpe's, hit right away. The idea was to get four different artists doing strips that would alternate. They got Trimpe and Steve Englehart-- -- Barry Smith joined the team at the last minute, and the fourth is a staff artist at Newsday, Gary Viscupic.

It was hoped there would be two political people (Trimpe and Englehart), one sociological commentary person (Barry Smith), and the fourth a cultural commentator. They have been unable to locate that fourth, and so have been using Viscupic's.

Herb Trimpe is doing a strip called "The Eternal Soldier," which for the most part, comments on the evils of war. Recently he has started branching out and is commenting on other aspects of politics. He is considered by Plate the most "solid"(in terms of looking like a comic) of the artists.

Steve Englehart came up with the idea of "The Phantom of the Third World" ("The man of a thousand faces, who can become any down-trodden type at will, and appear anywhere on the globe."), and was given the story line by Plate for the first few. Englehart currently does the story and the art.

Barry Smith came in at the last minute with his unique, "Love is Strange" strip. There was a lot of resistance to him at first from the people at Newsday (and Plate believes that many people at Newsday still don't understand a thing he's doing.), but is the most appealing of the artists to Plate and many fans. The strip is very subtle in its abstract views of love.

Gary Viscupic is a staff artist at Newsday from the University of Illinois. Viscupic describes his strip, "Duperman and Kid Kool": "It represents kids growing up, looking at comic books (I had this image of Superman. . .), and recognizing that it was all a bunch of hogwash. Duperman represents, tongue-in-cheek, the fact that we've been duped by the whole concept of America the Beautiful, apple pie, and the whole thing. Kid Kool is a symbol of kid's awareness in breaking this deception." His art is very illustrative, but Plate feels he hasn't gotten the feel of the medium yet, and has to be worked with.

In addition, Newsday is using political cartoonist Ranan Lurie's syndicated comic strip, "Mr. Politician," as a back-up feature, in case

DUPERMAN & KIDKOOL
I AM THE COMICBOOK SUPER-HERO WHO HAS INSTILLED IN OUR YOUTH THOSE IDEALS SO CHERISHED BY OUR SOCIETY... Watch what Duperman does... (But also watch Kid Kool grow up!)
NURTURED SINCE BIRTH ON THESE IDEALS, KIDKOOL LEARNS THE MEANING OF TRUTH...JUSTICE...
TONKIN' AH'LL BRING THE BOYS HOME!
!!!
??
AND THE AMERICAN WAY!
WOW! HAVE I BEEN DUPED! THINGS HAVE GOT TO CHANGE, SO STAY TUNED KIDS... NEXT TIME, THIS STRIP WILL BE MINE!
...TO BE CONTINUED.....

Viscupic's doesn't work out.

Both Plate and John Walsh, current editor of the Ideas section, (Plate is now an editor at New York magazine) believe this format has tremendous potential and is vastly different from the political cartoon idea. "One particular departure," says Plate, "is that there is a recurring character. It's more complicated than a political cartoon, too. The cartoon is dependant on the caption. The art rarely carries it. With the strip, you have a few more dimensions to play around with." John Walsh says, "This is a self-contained vehicle.I think you can say more with it than in a political cartoon. Perhaps you don't get the impact you would with a Tom Darcy or a Oliphant, but it offers a more sophisticated way of making a commentary on a political situation. There are so many things you can bring in. The bigger space is an important consideration."

Walsh says it has brought mixed reaction from the staff. "A lot of people don't like it because the section is heavy enough with opinion and cerebral matter, and we don't think we should impose a cerebral comic strip on somebody."

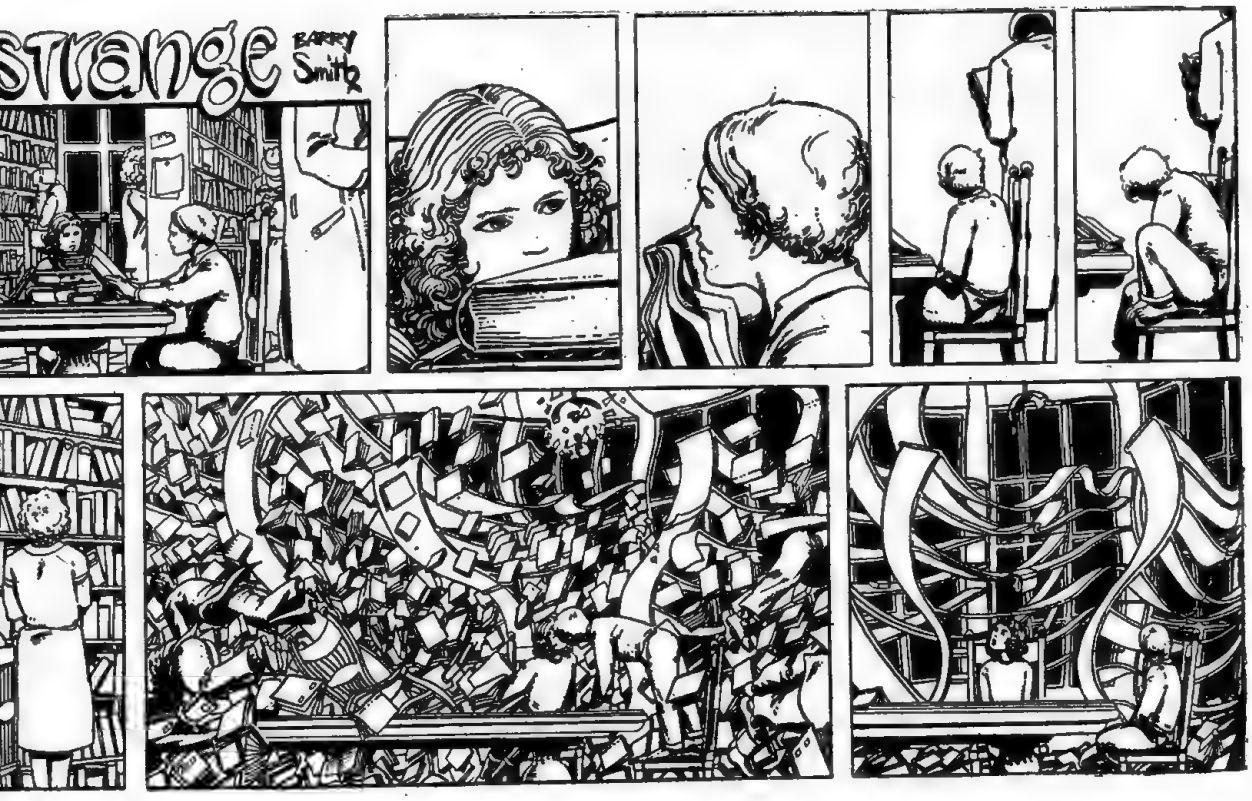
The feature is a success now, Plate thinks, since it is accepted. "I had a difficult time selling it at Newsday, and met a lot of opposition from the editors. I had to fight for it. It's difficult to start something new, where there is no precedent to follow. It doesn't cost Newsday much money, it gets people to look at the section, and it develops a lot of possibilties that haven't been explored."

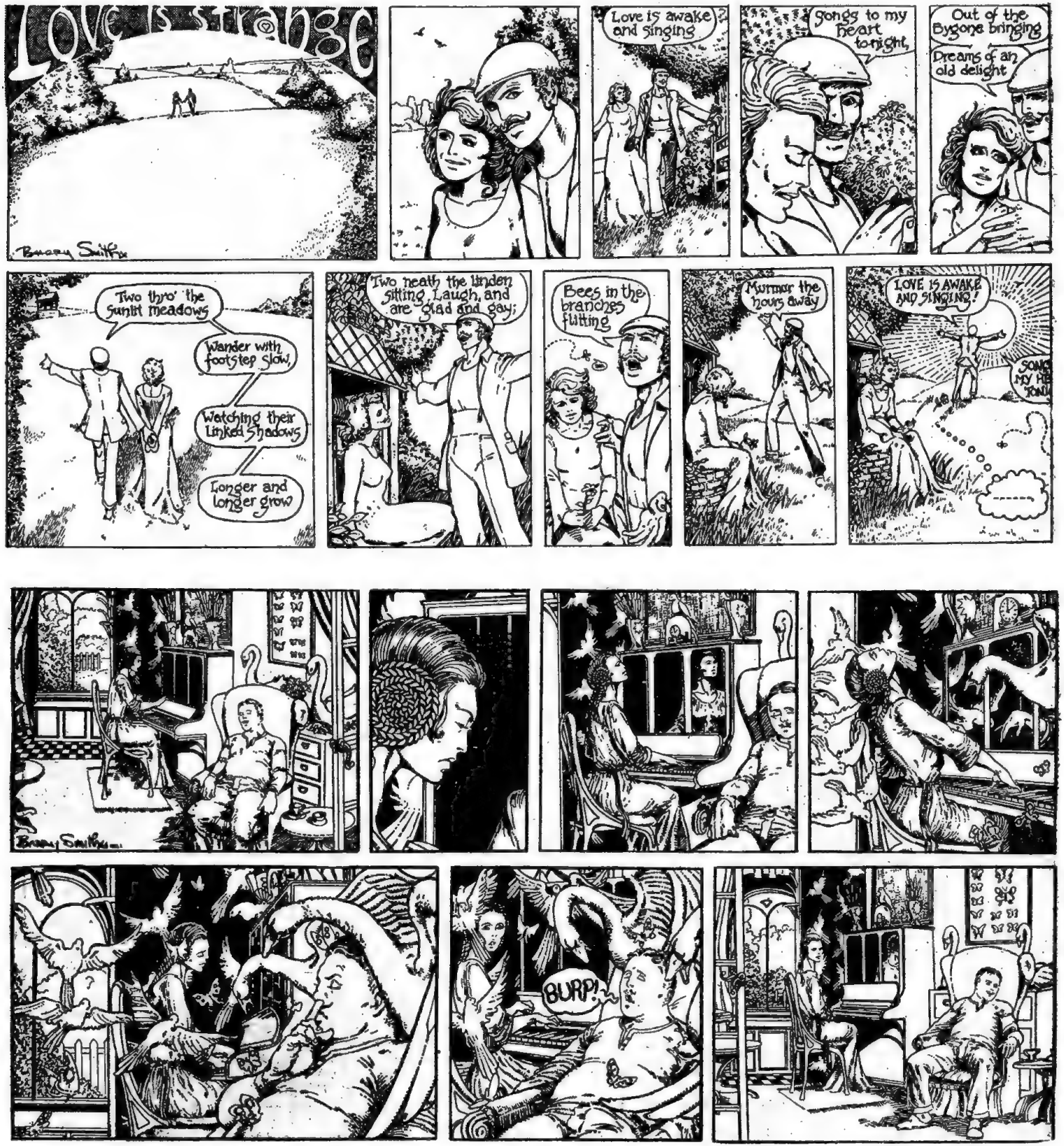
The. possibilities Plate mentioned include more room, perhaps even a full page, color (inserting the strip in the new rotogravure section of the paper), and possible syndication.

Plate says, "The whole concept of the political strip needs to be refined, but I think the newspapers can exploit it. Newsday is probably the only Establishment paper in the country that has ventured in this field. It's important that Graphic Opinion succeeds, because if it does, it can even be syndicated. The potential of the medium is enormous."

"The Eternal Soldier," "Duperman and Kidkool," and "Love is Strange" are copyrighted 1972 by Newsday, Inc. "The Phantom of the Third World" is copyrighted 1972 by Steve Englehart.

THE PHANTOM OF THE THIRD WORLD
THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES, WHO CAN BECOME ANY DOWNTRODDEN TYPE AT WILL, AND APPEAR ANYWHERE ON THE GLOBE.
--BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL ME BY MY WRISTBAND!
THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION...
OKAY-- CAN THE ARGUMENTS/ ARE WE AGREED ON OUR POSITION FOR MINORITIES?
YES!
YES!
RIGHT! THEN LET'S GO!
WHAT ARE YOU GAWKING AT? SOMEBODY HAS TO BE THE PHANTOM IN THIS STRIP!
--AND I ALWAYS SAID I COULD BE ANY DOWNTRODDEN TYPE!
© 1972 STEVE ENGLEHART


strange
BARRY Smith


Love is strange
Bruce Smith
Love is awake and singing
Songs to my heart tonight,
Out of the Bygone bringing
Dreams of an old delight
Two thro' the sunlit meadows
Wander with footstep slow,
Watching their linked shadows
Longer and longer grow
Two neath the linden sitting, Laugh, and are glad and gay;
Bees in the branches flitting
Murmur the hours away
LOVE IS AWAKE AND SINGING?
SONG MY HE
JOY!
BURP!

'AN AUTOGRAPHED PAPER DRINKING CUP (autographed & used by F. Frazetta) $15.00'

-PRICELIST OF H. ROGOFSKY, 4/71

The man sat at a large, well-made desk, and added figures on a calculating machine, cackling to himself as he did so. As the list of sums grew, sweat beaded upon his greasy brow, and the laughter took on a higher, tenser tone. The man's eyes bulged slightly from amidst the mounds of fat that was his face, and he grew more and more intent upon the tape that curled from the machine. That tape represented his earnings for that week, four figures already, and he viewed the list with a feeling that bordered on physical lust.

His droolings were abruptly halted by the sound of heavy footsteps sounding behind him. He whirled in the padded swivel chair, and paled as he saw the intruder. "The Phandom Stranger! W-why have you come here? How did you get . . . I mean . . ."

"Yes, I know what you mean. You've spent thousands to make this penthouse airtight, and you want to know how I managed to gain entrance. Sorry, pal, that's my secret. An ace in reserve."

The man in the chair looked into the face of the Stranger, and felt his old confidence again. He had been shaken when the Stranger made known his presence, but now he felt in control of the situation. After all, wasn't he the greatest comic book dealer of all? Weren't there servants, or at least the faithful old Igor, waiting outside the study door, waiting only for his call to rush in? What had he to worry about?

"Look,Stranger, why're you here?You know I've always been a straight dealer. I've always treated my customers right, given them everything that I promised them. You have no reason to bother me, an honest businessman. So why're you here?"

"You're right, fat man, legally you're in the clear. You've managed to stay on the right side of the line, though you've come awfully close to crossing it. But now, legal or not, you've gone too far." The Stranger's face contorted into a fearsome visage, rage personified. "This latest advertisement of yours is too much." The Stranger threw a copy of the dealer's price list into the fat sallow face.

Text by JEFF ANDERSON
Art by KLAUS JANSON

The dealer picked up the booklet, and quickly paged through it. "Why, everything in here's on the up and up. I see nothing that could be called, from any angle, illegal."

"Look on the third page, rat. Read it out loud."

"Third page? Why, it's only an ordinary ad, just like any other in the book. I see nothing —"

The Stranger snatched the sale list from the dealer's pudgey hands. "Okay, then, I'll read it to you. Listen— 'NEW! Original, one of a kind statues and figurines done by all your favorite comic book artists! These range from two and a half to six inches in length, and vary in circumferance. They are of a plain, unpainted color, and each one is different! The material used varies in color and consistancy, and is of a soft, pliable nature. These figurines took up to three days to make, and are sure to be the pride of your collection! Only fifteen dollars for each of these individualized figurines! These are in the modern art vein, and you can spend hours looking at the piece from all angles, forever finding new and different forms! *Sorry, we are unable to give you choice of artist, but we can guarantee that each is the product of a staff member of either Marvel, DC, or Warren!'"

When he had finished reading, the Stranger's face was darker than ever, andhis entire body seemed to radiate anger and menace. The fat little dealer, on the other hand, was still confident and sure of himself.

"Sure," he said, "that's my ad. What of it? Fifteen dollars seems to me to be a small price for such one of a kind items by the pros. The fans, I'm sure, will be happy to pay that much, and I'll be happy to sell the items. So what's wrong with that?"

"You fat Polish pig! The words came from deep in the Stranger's throat, and his lips did not move as he spoke, "You greasy bastard! You're willing to sell such things to unsuspecting fans... you're willing to sell them such shit?!" He spat the words out.

At the final phrase, the dealer's face went white, and his pudgy body shook. "What?" he quiveringly asked, "What did you say?"

"You were willing to sell that... that shit to your buyers", the Stranger continued, "and then you would have hidden behind a technicality! Yes, you would've been protected by the law; you've done nothing illegal. But you didn't reckon on me becoming involved in the case. And that was a serious mistake indeed!"

"But — how did you know? The list was just released today, and I haven't sent any of the figurines to anyone!"

"Your eyes. You can put on all the disguises you want, but the greed in your eyes always shines out like a beacon. You see, I saw you coming out of the National Periodical Publications building late one night. I was patroling to protect the offices against artwork thieves, and I happened to see you leaving. I first saw you from above, and that fat waddle-walk of yours attracted my attention. I didn't think it was you until I saw the greed shining in your eyes. I thought maybe you had gold bullion in the bag you were carrying! You see," said the Stranger, "greed has been your downfall in more ways than one!"

"That night I followed you, and was able to get good look at the bag and its contents. For a long time I was puzzled about your plans. I could think of no reason why you would want such things. I never dreamed you capable of such inhuman deception."

The Stranger made a move for the greasy dealer. "And I intend to prevent it..."

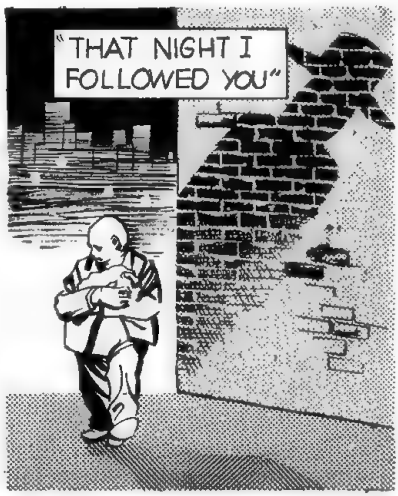
The dealer's face twisted in fear, and he shrieked toward the door of his study, "Igor! Igor, come here! I need you!"

"No need to bother, punk. I took care of him on my way here." His strong arm pinioned the dealer's arms behind his back, and held them deep into the rings of fat that covered his middle. He shrieked again, this time a formless sound that conveyed no other message than pure fear.

"I think it's time I gave you a taste of what you had planned for fandom. And remember," he said, "this is only the start of what will happen to you if you insist on carrying out this scheme." And then the Phandom Stranger was gone.

Three hours later, Igor awakened, feeling stiff and sore, and still a bit groggy. But he hurried into his master's study, attracted by the muffled sobs and curses that emanated from the room. And there in the dark he almost tripped over his master, a bloated figure hamstrung on the floor, it's face thrust into a large plastic sack that smelled sickeningly of feces.

And in the weeks that followed, every order for the figurines was returned to the sender, with a free Golden Age comic thrown in for good measure. Another dastardly deed prevented, and fandom would never know it had to thank . . . **THE PHANDOM STRANGER**



Not THAT Billy Graham!

(C) 1970 Warren Publications, Inc.

How did you first become interested in art?

I used to trace comic books. That's how I learned. I used to get comic books and cut out every single panel in a comic and paste them on a milk carton. The bottom of the milk carton was like a frame. I put them all on my wall. It was covered.

How did you first become interested in comics?

A cousin of mine used to read a lot of comics. When I'd go to his house, I'd steal his.

What did he say about that?

He said, "Bring them back." Yeah, I'd bring them back . . . all cut up.

Did you read the pulps or the comic strips?

Just the strips. My favorite then was Moon Mullins.

What's your favorite now?

Moon Mullins. One of my favorite ones now is Prince Valiant. I liked it better when it was done by Hal Foster.

Who would you say influenced you back then?

This is going to sound weird, but one of the guys who influenced my work then I'm finally working with now . . . George Tuska.

Who influenced your stuff as your style was developing?

Al Williamson and Frank Frazetta. I used to work at EC. I handled the books in the mailroom, making sure the books came out, taking care of the kids who came up to buy them. From time to time, the artists themselves used to come in. I'd show them what I did. Al Williamson used to help me a lot. So did Johnny Craig, Marie Severin, and Bill Gaines.

Were you a fan of their stuff?

I bugged them for a job for about a year. I went down every week and bought anything and everything. So they finally said, "We'll keep you here and give you a job."

Did you go to any art schools?

The High School of Music and Art and then the School of Visual Art.

Hogarth taught there, didn't he?

Yeah, he's retired now, but he was a great influence on my work. I took anatomy under him and he told me to go into comics. I used to see some of the Tarzan originals he did. They were beautiful. I have a book by him, Dynamic Anatomy, that's like a bible to me.

Do you still use it for reference?

Sure. That and Bridgeman's books.

Do you think it's better to learn the ropes of the field through art school or as someone's assistant?

As an assistant for an already-established artist. He can show you techniques; how to hold a brush, how to hold a pen. When you're working they can be there right alongside of you, whereas in school, an instructor can only tell you what to do. He has to move from student to student and can't spend four or five hours with one student. So if someone wants to become a cartoonist, he should study under the artist he admires most and try to become his assistant.

When I went to Visual Arts, I didn't take anything in the way of cartooning. I took anatomy, fine illustrations, book jackets.

Did you know then that you wanted to go into comics?

No, I didn't know. I just took a general course to become a commercial artist. It happened by accident that I got into comics. I went up to Warren and I threw work at him. I said, "Here, use it," and left. He called me later on and said he would like me to do something. I finally went to work for him.

How about a brief history of your career?

I first started in the commercial field, with my work printed in magazines. To me it was bleeach. So I learned from the work I saw printed. I tried to get my hands on as many black and white drawings by different artists, so I could study them, and I developed a certain style.

What was the first thing you were paid for?

That was in elementary school. I won a contest on "Keep Your City Clean."

It didn't work.

The City gave me twenty five dollar I was eleven years old. It was printed in Junior Scholastic. That was the first time I'd been paid for art . . . and I've been getting twenty five dollars ever since.

Do you prefer to ink your own pencils?

Yes and no. When you have to lay out a story and pencil it, it has to be approved. The pencils are rough at first, and then you tighten them up. Then when they are approved, you have to go over them

with ink and be certain that the same quality comes out when it's inked. That's a lot of work. It's very creative and you feel awfully proud of the end result, but it's a lot of work. When someone else does all that work and all you have to do is to ink it, that's a gas. There's nothing to do. It's not creative, but it's easy.

Have you seen Wally Wood's inks? He changes the entire pencils around to his style and does some creative things with them.

You know why? Because he's Wally Wood!

How do you think Steranko felt when he was doing Shield? He wrote, pencilled, inked and colored them.

Steranko came out with some pretty weird innovations in the comic art form. The man is a genius. He worked hard and he got to where he is today by hard work.

Steranko used movie effects to a great extent; slow motion, pan back.

Like I said, the man is fantastic. In one page, he can get 14 pencils to show the gradual transition of events. I tried it once in a story entitled "Rhapsody in Red." A page called for 6 panels but I wanted to show this approach that this countess had, coming down stairs and approaching two people, and leave one balloon, in the first panel, for her dialogue. And there were five panels where there were only supposed to be one.

What do you think of Barry Smith?

He has greatly improved as every artist should, with time. But I think he was being overworked. As for his Conan, let me say this about that, and let me make it perfectly clear: Every artist who saw Conan number 1, said, "I wish they had given it to me." Barry Smith was very fortunate to get that assignment.

The thing is, Smith has developed his whole world of Conan.

Right.

And now that's all he can do.

I hope I don't fall into that bag. Because once you do a certain character, everything else begins to look like that character.

Your work seems to be very malleable. It can fit almost any setting. And then, you used to put the stars in your stories.

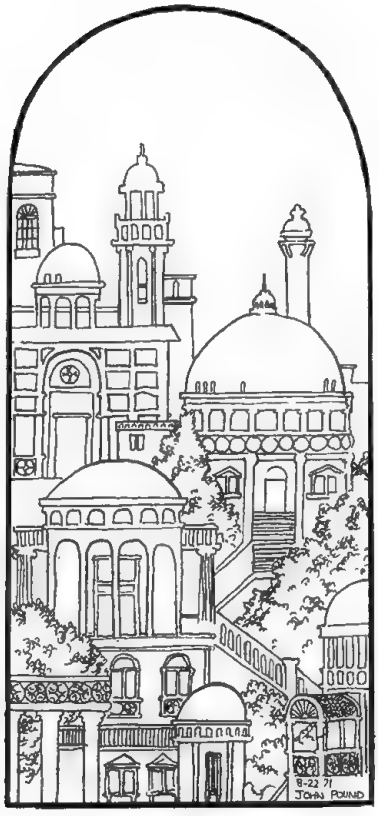
Yeah. I cut that out though. I got into trouble once. I got a cable from overseas from an actor who wanted rights, or something like that. I won't mention any names.

Why did you do it?

It came about when I did a story called "Scaly Death." It reminded me so much of "One Million B.C." with Victor Mature. So when I used him in the story, I decided to do it with the rest.

That story had a Frazetta cover. Was it based on the story or vice versa?

Frazetta saw the pencil roughs for the story and chose one panel that he would like to paint. He changed it in his painting a little. Since I hadn't inked it yet, when I saw the painting, I geared my inking in the same direction as the painting. It went hand in hand. We didn't discuss it; it just came about.



Did he comment on the finished story?

He commented on every panel, every page. He went wild about it. Incidentally, that story had to be done twice, the first time all in pencil. The pencils were too detailed. The drawings looked like photographs. I spent about an hour on each panel.

Many of the Spanish artists are doing almost photographic work.

Yeah, Warren's using it now, but then he didn't want it. He wanted very simple work.

What type of comic book do you enjoying doing the most?

Sword and Sorcery. I think it's a throwback to Foster's Prince Valiant. I have just about an entire collection of his original Sunday strips, from the Journal–American and other papers. I guard them very well.

The thing is, Prince Valiant was so restrained, and yours is so wild.

In the years when I was studying Foster's work, I knew how restrained it was. Compare his work to Raymond's Flash Gordon. All his characters were beautiful. They posed beautifully; when a character fell, he fell with grace. When one of Foster's figures fell, you could see dead weight. I wanted to come around and really show it in succession; where he's falling gracefully, and finally he just hits the ground and blood spurts out!

Are your pencils loose or tight?

Very tight. When the inks are applied, it tightens up even more so. I try to get a lot of realism in the pages that I work on.

However, in most cases, you exaggerate the realism. Jack Kirby and Carmine Infantino do this to convey the action. Don't you? For example, there was one picture in Phase of a barbarian and a girl. . .

Oh, that was done because I wanted to show power. It wasn't meant to be an exaggerated piece of art.

I mean, you wouldn't find somebody who looked like that.

If you did, get out of the way!

How old are you?

Too old. On my next birthday I think I'll be 36. That's too old.

Would you like to go back in time, to when you were younger?

No.

You don't regret anything in your past?

Only one thing. . . but that's not printable.

Do you have any objections to the comics as a medium?

None whatsoever.

Do you ever find there's an effect you'd like to achieve, but the medium just won't permit it?

Right now the comics medium won't allow what I'd like to do. I'd like to make a radical innovation as far as certain techniques, certain styles, and I think they can be achieved. Right now the comic medium won't allow it. For instance, where Steranko would take a splash page and you could read it up and down or in circles, or whatever, I'd like to take that one step further. Read the first page, then the last page, the second page, the second to last page, and things like that. In color comics now, instead of reading from left to right for a row and then going to the next, I'd like to see it where you would read the first row from left to right. At the end of that line you'd read the panels down to the bottom of the page. Then you'd read a row from right to left and finally go from the bottom to the top.

Doesn't Warren give you freedom to do what you like?

Yes. For instance, that story "Staples" was coupled with actual photographs of staples and hands. He said, "Go to it." See, what he wanted to do was to try to implement the staples in the book into a story. That is how the idea came up.

I remember on that page where you had all the staples flying down, the page within a page, you had a bunch of comic books.

Right. He took one out. I won't tell which one, but he crossed it right out.

Is it still around?

They're not doing too well these days.

Castle of Frankenstein?

No.

Skywald?

Next question.
I didn't say it. I let you say it.

Do you have any problems in making your art subtle, considering the medium and the audience?

Yes. I sometimes tend to over–exaggerate muscular structure. They told me to tone down, become more subtle. I tried, and I got this figure just right. Then I said, "Let me put in this bicep here, " and when I put in that one, the other bicep looked a little too weak, so I strengthened that. Then the shoulder had to be a little thicker to balance with the biceps. Then the clavicle really had to burst out, and by then I had a top–heavy broad. So to make it all balance out the derriere had to come out. And I took it back to Warren and he said, "Didn't I tell you subtle?" I tried. Yes, I do have problems.

Do you do any commercial work outside of comics?

Ready for this now? OK. I'm writing a book, I'm writing a screenplay, I write stories, articles for other magazines, other free-lance art in the way of television storyboards, illustrations for the pulps (Amazing and Fantastic) and other things.

Which do you prefer, writing or drawing?

Making money. Most of the writing is comedy, some serious,and pretty soon I should be doing movie reviews. The first one should be "Shaft." I thought it was a good movie, but not as good as it was made to be. I'm hoping that the next few sequels that come out will be better. Oh, incidentally, I just found out that I may get a part in the next "Shaft" film. Right now I'm involved in an off-broadway production called "The Congressman."

If you didn't have to make money, what would you be doing?

Just relaxing. After that, writing. I enjoy that.

Would you advocate the comics themselves as a profession?

Only if the person who wants to go into comics has the fortitude and the dedication to devote an awful lot of time and work to them. It's not the best paying profession, but it gives a person a sense of reward.

How do you feel about fans coming up to you and saying, "Gee, I love your stuff," or conversely, "Why don't you learn how to draw?"

I don't care what they say, I just love it. I remember the 1970 Con. I looked over and I saw Neal Adams swamped with fans. Neal looked up at me, with a plea in his eyes, and he yelled out just as I was sneaking out, "Hey, Billy! Billy Graham!" Thousands of little voices went "Where? Where? Where?" They then rushed to the door, threw out their arms, lay down in my path, and said, "We got him!" Everybody rushed away from Neal, pulled him over with them, and they swamped me.

I had to go to the men's room. I started to go right there, but there was no room. Everybody was in the way.

How do you feel about doing sketches at Cons?

What I like to do is get into a certain place where I feel comfortable and sit up on something like a table. Then I just sketch away. I don't mind.

Who are your favorite artists?

One of the most recent artists to hit the comics field; Esteban Maroto. My all-time favorite is Al Williamson, and I really dig Frank Frazetta.

Do you think that the best comic artists are also good writers?

There's only one comic artist I know who can illustrate his own stories: Tom Sutton. He's a damn good artist. When he writes for himself, you can see the quality. It's top-notch. I think that any man who illustrates a story that he pored over is bound to do a better job than if he was given a script.

Why were the Warren awards instituted?

Because Warren wanted them instituted.

How would you describe Warren?

First of all, he is a man, he is 5'9", he weighs 135-145 pounds, he knows what he wants, goes after it and gets it. Period.

What do you think of underground comix?

They're great, because they let an artist do anything he wants and get away with it. Some of the stuff in there is very crude. I have a favorite: Richard Corben.

Do you work in any other media besides ink, wash or pencil?

Blood and sweat. Acrylics, oils and pastels. But pastels are my favorite.

Do you follow comics now?

Yeah. My favorite was Green Lantern before it was discontinued. That and Phantom Stranger. Vampirella is good. I've followed her story all the time that Archie Goodwin wrote it, but I don't know whether or not I'll follow it now that T. Casey Brennan takes it over. He's a good writer and has a good style, but not the same as Archie Goodwin's. Jose Gonzales is a damn good artist. He works amazingly fast.

Why did you like Lantern? It seemed to me that it was quite overdone and sensationalistic.

The reason I followed it was because of the artwork. A good artist can make a poor story better. I read the stories, but I spend more time on the artwork. I think that's because I'm an artist.

Your black and white work is known for it's use of wash. Could you explain how you go about applying wash to a picture?

I pencil the page first, naturally, and then I go over it with dirty water. Then I clean it up with clean water and sometimes go over it again with pencil smudges. There's a thing called a stub, used to achieve some of the effects. It's not all wash. I use the Malibu tray of tones sometimes, and I'll even use charcoal.

I understand you did strips for the porno papers. Can you give me some info on that?

No, because the District Attorney was looking for me at one time. He never found me. I took a long vacation. "Who is this guy with the pseudonym of Billy Graham?"

Why do you think so many fans break into the comic medium through Warren?

If they're good, he gives them a chance to have their work done. Warren is an innovator. He gives them a chance.

What is your opinion of nudity in the Warren mags?

I like it.

But the audience to which it is directed isn't that old. Would you be in favor of censoring it?

No, I'm not in favor of censorship. If the story calls for nudity, then the artist should follow the script.

What about the stories where the nudity is thrown in as a come-on to the kids and has no bearing on the story?

That I don't approve. When it's not called for, it should not be done.

What did you do as Managing Editor for Warren?

Everything except bookkeeping. I had to learn almost the entire business. When artwork was mailed in, or brought in, it had to be scrutinized and corrected. Stories had to be edited (I did some of that, Archie Goodwin did some), interviewing prospective artists and writers. I could accept and reject material, but Warren had the final say so.

You told me before that you had to change your style to fit into the color comics format.

It took a lot of help from the people at Marvel. I had a tendency to overdraw. What they want is simplicity, leave some room for the colorist.

What did you think of the story of the first Hero for Hire?

I liked it.

Do you think they hired you out of tokenism, since they are making such a big fuss over it being a Black character? Now they can say, "Gee, we have a Black man on the book, so everything must be cool."

No one said anything about that. They just said, "Hey, we have a story we'd like you to do." They told me that it was a Black superhero, but that's all I heard.

Do you think it's alright for a White writer to write about Blacks?

Yeah. If a man's a writer, he should be able to write on any subject; Black, White, Oriental, or what have you.

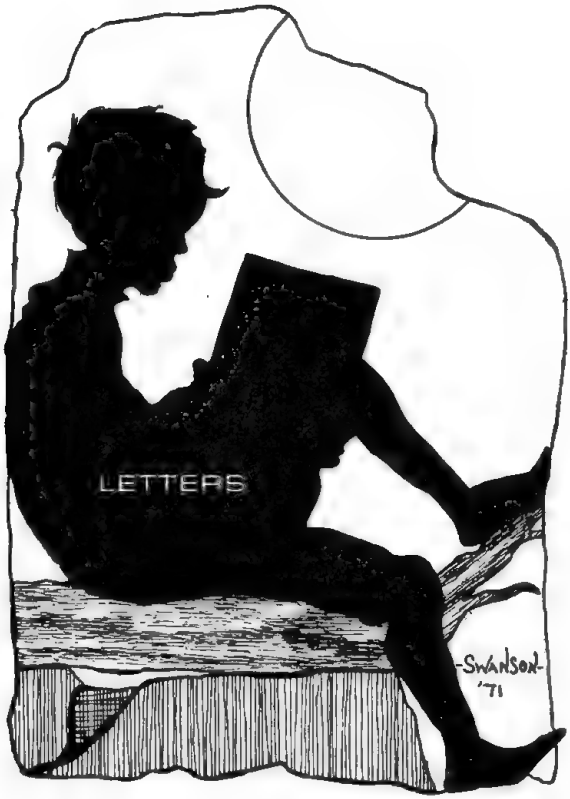
If he were that good a writer, would he be working in the comics?

Maybe that's what he likes.

As far as I know, you're the first Black artist doing major work in the comics. Have you had any problems getting into the field?

No. Just like any other artist Black or White, I've had to go around from one company to the next showing my work. When a man has talent, and wants to use it, and the company recognizes that talent, then it doesn't matter what race he is.

RONN SUTTON '71
payne



Letters have been edited to fit into available space. Onward. . .

Jeff Anderson
3700 Beechgrove Rd.
Grove City, Ohio, 43123

Just got, today, WWoC. Interesting, but not as good as I had hoped. George rated you "7" because of your fannish feeling. I didn't detect a huge amount of that. Many zines done three or four years ago had much more of this atmosphere, and had a more involved readership. But I suppose that now you've got as of this good old fannishness as anyone, excluding Dwight Decker.

Specific comments? Number six was interesting, and, as you say in your "Rebuttal" in that issue, consequently can be considered worthwhile. The only feature that wasnot to my liking was "Duffy's Tavern."

[Jeff wrote a great deal about the "Tavern" last ish, but Duffy tells me he is usingthe comments ins "DT" for Fandom Media, so why should I repeat them here? As for the other comment, I believe WWoC to be one of the most fannish zines around currently that is even slightly popular. Nowadays, it's not economically feasible to be fannish. FANzines just don't sell.]

Paul Chadwick
320 78th Pl. N.E.
Bellevue, Wash., 98004

Penzer's article was extremely well written and fairly interesting, but might have been longer and better researched. Unmentioned wen Njiord (of "The Valley of The Worm") and [illegible] Howard's far east, sport, and detective stories that appeared in such pulps as Oriental Stories. One oriental story, "The Purple Eye of Erlic" appeared in Spicy Adventure under the pen name Sam Walsher.

All in all, a neat little fanzine that needed more material in it. May I suggest some spot illoes, some fiction, both graphic and text, and a try at cramming as much material into the same of space.

[All of your suggestions have been taken into consideration. Glance through this issue.]

Ted Hagen
4108 Treasure Circle
Tampa, Fla., 33616

It was with insipid anticipation that I opened a brown envelope that arrived with today's assortment of junk mail. It contained WWoC. More junk mail? Nay!!! Absolutley fantastic is an inadequate expression of my exhilaration. WWoC is fandom's delight!

Since I cut my reading teeth with Siegel and Shuster's Superman, I must take exception with Duffy Vohland in regard to his conjecture concerning the "more adult" Superman Family. Jerry Siegel rolled Hercules, Robin Hood, Sir Galahad, and Sherlock Holmes into a super space–age identity in 1938 for the young reader. Superman, THE super–hero, is a primer, just as McGuffy's Reader was for a hundred years (and still is) a primer for tomorrow's fans. Parents buy The Three Mouskeeters for infantile youngsters, but the kids buys his first Superman and Green Lantern, Spider–Man will soon follow. Superman is transitional. I could go on to write a substantial thesis concerning the comic book as a class room reading aid

but this is scarcely the time. It is not that I disagree with Duffy, I merely want to point out a reader–topic–age (maturity) relationship which exists in regard to this one publication.

[I think what Duffy meant about themore mature Superman Family was that he is now much more realistic and interesting to older fans than he was in the past.]

Klaus Janson
396 Burnsford
Bridgeport, Conn., 06606

I finally got my copy of WWoC. And. . . I would like to write an official LoC. Now, the reason I am doing this is not because you asked your readers to do it, but because this issue definately warrants a comment or two. . . or three. (Christ, sounds like some of my old letters to Julie Schwartz.)

Anyway, I would like to approach this very systematically. Therefore, I will start with the subject that is closest to my heart; my lungs, er, no. I mean art, of course. The cover was excellent and by no means a let–down from last issue's cover (which I did not think was that sensational, but was good nonetheless).. The little illo by Jeff Jones was cute; I liked it. Newton's full–pager was a good figure, full of action, and moved very nicely. But I thought the ink job took away from the pencilling. I did not care for Marchesano's illo. Vincent has wonderful use of wash, but cannot draw too well. I will tell him what has been told me many a time: spend more time on drawing and forget technique.Fantucchio is a good example of what happens. He's got a god–enviable style but can't draw a strip. Those little illoes by Sallcrup literally made page 12 and 13. They were nothing outstanding but were used exceptionally well. I notice that Dave Russell is paying more attention to picture composition than ever before, and it shows

All around, one of the best zines I've seen in a long while.

[Well, we have a Newton–pencilled work this ish. Do you think the inks make that much difference? About Fantucchio's strips, I happened to like them very much. I could see nothing wrong withthem.]

Gordon Matthews
8 Perry Street,
Union City, Pa., 16438

I liked Bernie Bubnis' column. But not all fanzines are offset wonders, Thank .There are still editors getting purple ditto carbon all over their hands.

I hope you had fun writing your "Rebuttal." It reminded me of Wally Conger's Napalm.

I don't think it's accurate to compare Howard's heroes (if only by association) to Doc Savage, the Spider, etc. They were of very different classes. Doc Savage, etc. all appeared in their own pulp magazines, and were therefore established as an artificial series, much like comic book heroes. The Howard heroes, on the other hand, appeared (mostly) in Weird Tales as weird/adventure stories, and Conan was a series because Howard wanted to write about him; for this reason Conan is more honest than Doc Savage.

Adam Malin
16 E. 2nd St.
Freeport, N.Y., 11520

I've got a few minutes of free time now, so I thought I'd let you know my opinions on WWoC 6. Generally speaking, it was one of the few remaining GREAT fanzines. And these days,that's a rarity.

The high point of the issue was Bernie Bubnis' "Muddy Waters In Thinking Land." I found the writing absolutely brilliant. It is perhaps the best article of it kind I've ever seen in a zine. My hat is off to Bubs.

WWoC was light, easy reading, filled with good fan stuff. I'm more locked onto prozines now, but once in awhile it's nice to know that for fifty cents there's still dependable ol' Wonderful World.

Roger Schoolcraft
2015 Eldersville Rd.,
Follansbee, W. Va., 26037

You said in your editorial you weretortunate to get sketches from Adams, Jones, and Wrightson. I disagree. I have had my collective ear filled to the brim with sketches. I'd rather have a fan drawing pencilled and inked than a pro sketch, despite the fact that Neal Adams did it.

Sorry Neal, but I've seen better work from Newton. Check his work in Fantastic Fanzine.

How can one comment on Gordon Matthews' article and your "Rebuttal?" No matter how one looks at it, you were both only stating OPINIONS.

I will say this. Jon Penzer's article onR.E. Howard's "Lesser Heroes" was good, as well as Klaus Janson's accompanying art. How about an in–depth one on Conan himself? I don't mean

Thomas' version, nor Carter's or de Camp's. I mean Howard's. Have an artist of yours read some Conan stories by Howard and allow him to come up with his own version.

I'm glad you published that Aquaman full–pager by Dave Cockrum. It was beautiful. I'm also glad because Aquaman (an old favorite of mine) is seldom seen in fanzines. He'll probably be seen even less now since his comic has been shelved.

Black's woman was good. Is she someone in particular?

[I agree with you about those sketches. That's why, as you may have noticed in this issue, I've established a "no sketch" policy. As far as commenting on opinions, the best way to do this is to offer your OWN opinions, as many readers did with "Article" and "Rebuttal."

I wouldn't want to do a comprehensive article on Howard's Conan or artist's adaptations of the REH stories. Not after such fine jobs on them in MCR 2 and Anomaly 2, respectively. Black's girl was Jann North of the Starmasters, who has appeared in his fine publication, Paragon.]

Ron Sorrells
2592 Victory Ln.,
Medford, Ore., 97501

The only thing I disliked about the zine was the size. With the quality of art and written work you had in issue 6, you really should have been 8½x11. If you went to increased size and retained the quality of work you displayed in number 6, you really would have been tops in your class of fanzine. And that includes Fantastic Fanzine, which is currently tops.

There were several reasons why WWoC was so good, the largest being the quality of the written work. There was no half-baked article to be found. Indeed, "Duffy's Tavern" was the least intelligent, and his column is usually the highlight of the zine it appears in. Certainly the highlight of the zine had to be Gordon Matthews' "Article." I have been looking forward to such a column ever since I entered fandom; an article not devoted to just comics, but something a little better. Nowhere was the 25 cent price hike mentioned, or the fact that Stan Lee shaved his beard, or that comics are dying, or other such facts (?) that always take up the fanzine. The only thing that dissapointed me was the article's shortness.

The second best feature was "Meet The Fan." I found Dave Russell to be a real refreshing experience. I mean most fans just aren't that personable, or joking, or whatever.

[I'm sure you'll enjoy the interview with Bubs this ish if you liked the Dave Russell piece. Check it out and let me know, OK?

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Bernie Bubnis generally commented on the issue, knocked Gordon Matthews and Duffy Vohland for their articles, and blasted me for my "Rebuttal," which he called nit-picking and not fair at all. Well, let's put it this way. If I had seen "Article" in another zine, I would have written an LoC which would have been identical to "Rebuttal," my feelings being so strong. Instead, I used my comments as follow–up article. Is there really that much difference?

Robert Greenberger sent a short LoC in which he praised last ish.

Dave Hartman said "Article" was a bunch of shit and would rather see Mike O'Neal draw the Hulk than Herb Trimpe. I'm forced to disagree here. Trimpe, while not a good illustrator is a more–than –adequate storyteller. I think this is why that issue with Trimpe layouts and Grainger art was such an improvement.

Steve Mattingly liked the issue, but thinks Gordon Matthews should be thrown out of fandom with ideas like the ones he expressed in "Article." Talk about freedom of speech! Sheesh!

Dave Russell accused me of lousy editing and called me a eunuch. Huh?!?

John Penzer called WWoC one of the best bargains in fandom.

Neal Fugate was impressed by the art of Klaus Janson.

Tim Seidler thanked me for hours of entertainment and wished me good luck in the future. Thank you.

My sincerest apologies to all these people as well as those whose letters were edited. I wish I had the room to print all the letters I got. Well, at least we had a lengthy lettercol this time.

B'th'way, just because WWoC won't have another ish in the near future doesn't mean you shouldn't send me LoCs on thish. First of all, I'd really like to know what all of you thought of this ish. And secondly, if WWoC ever returns, I'd like a letters section. OK? OK!

COCKRUM

MEMO:

TO: The Publisher FROM: The Editor

How's this for an editorial?

Short and sweet this time. Instead of the usual fan editorial, let me thank the countless people who made this issue possible.

As most of you know, this will be the last issue of Shazam! The Wonderful World of Comix. This is due to my belief that fandom in general will no longer support a quality magazine by and for fans.

For those of you who are interested in fanishness, I recommend your joining any number of APAs (Amateur Press Alliances) such as CAPA- alpha, NYAPA, and APA-5.

Neal

MEMO:

TO: The Editor FROM: The Publisher

I think it stinks!

Here's my Publisher's notes:

A young gent bopped over to me, and the following discussion ensued:

"Hey, you're Neal Pozner, the brilliant editor of SHAZAM! Wow man, why are you publishing Neal Pozner's fanzine?"

"For the money. What else?"

"Oh, come on Neal, you can't fool me with that jive, Bro'! You're too dedicated to do something merely for the money."

"How right you are! [When we first met, I found out right away that Neal was a very modest fellow. He told me so himself.—N. Pozner, editor] You see, Neal Pozner [A prince of a fellow and a really sweet guy.— N.P.] came to me with quite a pressing problem [Yeah, my iron wasn't working!— N.P.] He had already fully layed out over half of his upcoming issue of The Wonderful World of Comix [You've heard of that, haven't you?—N.P.], but he didn't have the personal finances available to publish it himself. [i.e. I was broke!—N.] Quite unfortunate. [That's not what you said to ME the first time I asked you.—N.P.] Realizing it would be a shame if WWoC never got off the ground due to these financial problems, I decided to publish it for him. [After I kicked his ass in, that is.—N.P.]

"Wow man, that's really nice of you. [You should hear MY side of the story.—N.P.] Too bad you're such a sucker . . ."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Hey man, don't you know? WWoC still has a two thousand dollar defecit from the last issue."

". . . . oh? . . ."

And Neal, don't you know all us fans are schizophrenic?

NEAL Boo!

AH'M THE RINGO THING!
BEST WISHES
JACK KIRBY
+
Joe Sinnott